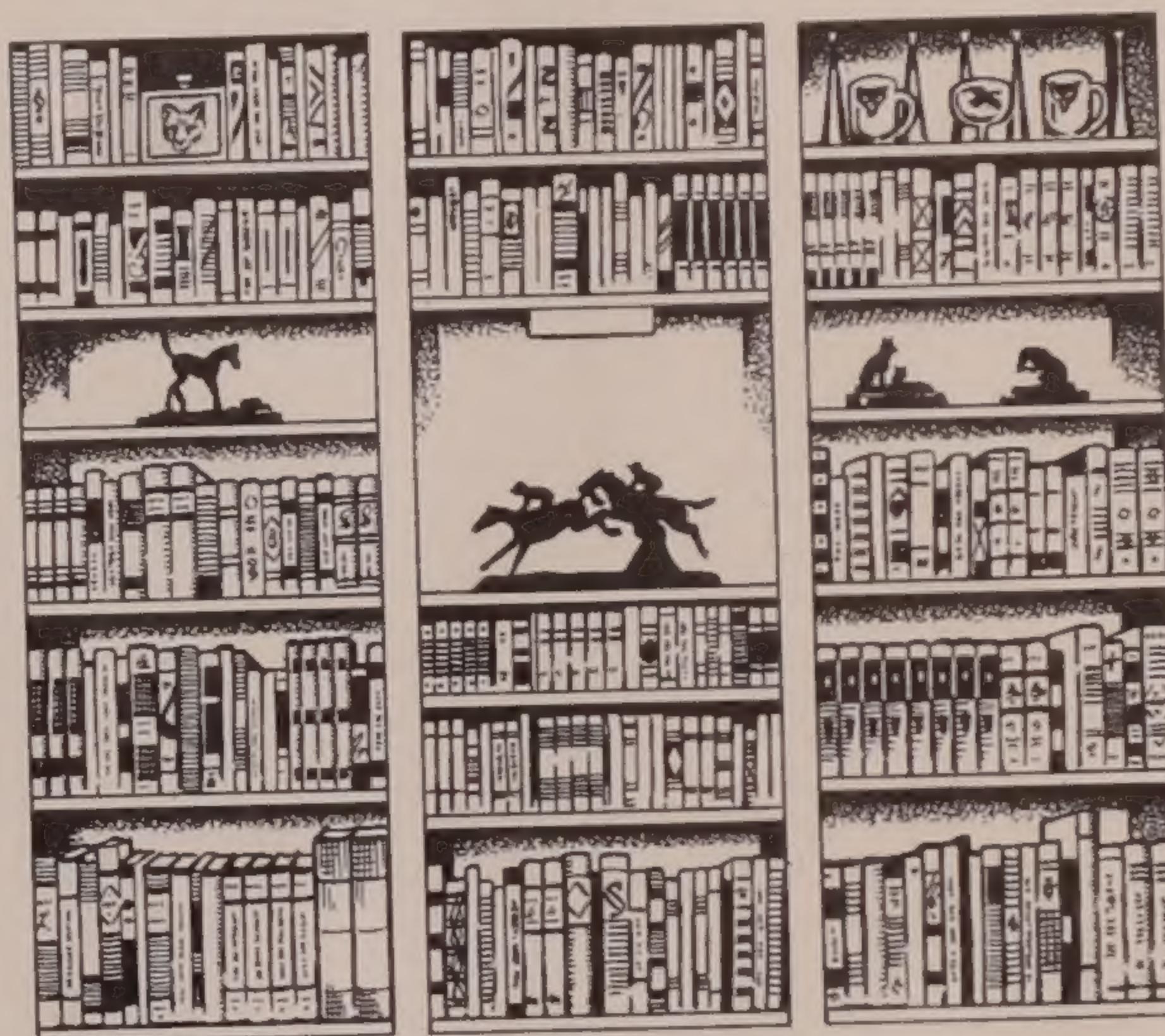


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To A. E. Godeffroy Esq.,  
Guynard, N.Y.  
\*

with sincere regards of

F. E. Pond.  
("Will Wildwood.")

Office "Turf, Field and Farm,"  
39 Park Row, N.Y., Feb. 13, '85. } }



FRANK FORESTER'S  
FUGITIVE SPORTING SKETCHES;

BEING

*The Miscellaneous Articles upon Sport and Sporting, Originally Published in the Early American Magazines and Periodicals.*

BY THE LATE

*WILLIAM HENRY HERBERT,*

Author of "Frank Forester's Field Sports," "Fish and Fishing," "American Game in its Seasons," "Warwick Woodlands," "The Deer Stalkers," "My Shooting Box," "Quorndon Hounds." etc.

EDITED,

With a Memoir of HERBERT, and Numerous Explanatory Notes,

BY

*WILL WILDWOOD,*

Author of "Memoirs of Eminent Sportsmen," etc.

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WESTFIELD, WISCONSIN.

1879.

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TO  
*THE ADMIRERS OF FRANK FORESTER,*  
THIS VOLUME OF  
FUGITIVE SPORTING SKETCHES  
IS  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.  
BY  
THE EDITOR.



## *PREFACE.*

MY object in presenting a work of this kind to the sporting public, at this time, is quite fully defined in the introductory chapter, and to this I have but little to add. The utility and interest of a volume of this kind will, I trust, be apparent to the most casual observer. The writings of "Frank Forester," as stated elsewhere, are too well and favorably known to require an apology for placing a new collection of his superb sketches before the fraternity of which he was, while living, the brightest light.

I desire here to acknowledge my obligations to that keen sportsman and delightful sporting writer, "Toxophilus," whose generous aid and co-operation in this work has greatly lessened the task of the writer in gathering from various sources the gems from Forester's pen which have been, until now, adrift upon the sea of literature.

With these preliminary remarks, I leave the reader to the perusal of "Frank Forester's Fugitive Sporting Sketches."

THE EDITOR.



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## *INTRODUCTORY.*

THE sporting works of "Frank Forester" are too well known and dearly prized throughout the civilized world, to require any extended explanation, or—as seems much in vogue—an apology for placing a new work before the public, and particularly the sporting public, of America. Although this lamented master of the craft has produced a greater number of works for the instruction and entertainment of sportsmen than any other author upon kindred topics, past or present, his writings are characterized by such beauty of expression, and graceful delineation of natural scenery, the habits and haunts of our game birds and animals, etc., that the fraternity is ever eager to peruse anything from or pertaining to "Our Frank."

His incomparable "Field Sports," "Fish and Fishing," "American Game in its Seasons," "Sporting Scenes and Characters," and other sporting works, are still as dearly prized as when first published, over a quarter of a century ago. All bear the indelible impress of a master mind, and have the qualities of imperishable works. The same is true of all his glorious sporting tales, which literally teem with bright images of field and stream, picturing faithfully the forest nook, the deep woodlands, crystal brook, fairy glens, and all those sylvan retreats so dear to the sportsman. His were among the first, as they are undeniably the finest, contributions to our sporting literature; and the bright thoughts of his surpassing genius, as embalmed in his writings, will ever remain a grand and indestructible monument to his memory, more durable than bronze or granite memorial, as these shall remain fresh and beautiful when the more perishable material would have crumbled or been consumed by rust. Truly, "Frank Forester" created his own memorial more durably than other hands could do, through the medium of his gifted pen; and while the enthusiastic few who strove to erect a bronze memorial as

expressive of the admiration in which his writings are held by the fraternity of American sportsmen, failed for want of support, his sporting *brochures* still continue to shine with surpassing lustre, despite the lapse of time which has caused other, and among them many *worthy* works illustrative of field and forest sports, to become obsolete and forgotten. His sporting works are still unrivaled, the classics of American sporting literature.

Although English by birth, his sporting tales are essentially and truly American; a fact which he once stated in the somewhat equivocal terms that he was "an American author, of English birth," though the remark, properly accepted, is to all intents and purposes correct. Major GEORGE B. HALSTED, in his very able and eloquent address delivered at the unveiling of HERBERT's tomb-stone in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, May, 1876, alluded to him as "HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT, of England, the *Frank Forester* of America." It is under this *nom de plume* that he is most widely known and best appreciated, many recognizing him by this while entirely ignorant of his real name, although he has written far more voluminously as H. W. HERBERT than under his sporting alias of "Frank Forester." Thus, while his fine historical romances, essays, etc., upon which he supposed his fame as an author to depend, have become to a more or less extent obsolete, his works upon the sports and sportsmanship of America have long been acknowledged the highest authority in the land of his adoption.

Further comment upon this remarkable man, and his no less remarkable abilities as an author, the writer must for the present forego, merely premising that at some future date he hopes to place before the sportsmen of America a work descriptive of the literary labors and achievements of "Frank Forester."

The present series of sporting tales, etc., originally published in the old "Democratic Review," "Graham's Magazine," the old "Spirit of the Times," "Southern Military Gazette," and other periodicals long since suspended, have never been, to any extent, republished, and will therefore have nearly the interest of an original work to the present generation. It would seem in some measure a duty—and to the writer it is a very pleasant one—to preserve the fugitive sporting sketches of the lamented "Forester"

from an oblivion into which they must inevitably have fallen, if not redeemed by a work of this kind. His gems are by far too precious, and the store too small, to allow any to be lost.

These sketches—many of them written in his happiest vein—compare favorably with the more pretentious productions from the pen of “Our Frank,” and will no doubt be eagerly welcomed by all lovers of American sporting literature. Nothing could serve better to exemplify the inspiration, the keen zest in that most bewitching and subtle art which he fondly termed “the gentle science of wood-craft,” and, withal, the varied character and surpassing beauty of all his writings, than a collection of this description. It brings out in bold relief, and in delightful contrast, the varied style of his contributions to our sporting literature; displays to perfection the fruits of his scholarly mind; and, above all, exhibits throughout “that touch of sympathy which maketh all mankind akin.” As “Frank Forester,” the learned and enthusiastic master of true sportsmanship, he makes a companion, as it were, of the reader; leads him forth into the forest haunts he so well loves to frequent, and in glowing colors depicts beauties which had been hitherto unknown or unnoticed by the ardent pupil. The bright and many-hued garb of glorious Autumn, the prime season of the sportsman’s delight, he draws with such fidelity to nature that the reader is fain to accept his portraiture despite the teachings of the lamented BRYANT, who has in his immortal verse declared it “the saddest of the year.”

It would seem that the spirit of HERBERT is still with us, and ministers to the happiness, the instruction and the well-being of his fraternity, under the magic guise of “Frank Forester.” In sooth, “it carries a brave form, but ‘tis a spirit.” We feel its presence; we are cheered by the inspired teachings; and under the consolation thus afforded, are better able to bear the loss of his material form and awe-inspiring presence. This kindly spirit let us ever cherish, if we would keep pure and unsullied the sport and sportsmanship of America, for the advancement of which he gave his finest works.

And now, to close in the fitly-chosen words of him whose miscellaneous writings he thus ushers into the presence of the sporting fraternity, the editor has undertaken this “as being

indeed a labor of love. He has brought to it the whole of his energies, the best of his abilities; and though unused to sue for public favor, he does so far deviate from his accustomed practice as to crave this indulgence: that all the censure of the critics may fall upon his head, while all the praise may be awarded where it is only due," to the deceased sporting author.

Thus said "Frank Forester" in committing the "Sporting Scenes and Sundry Sketches" of his friend "J. CYPRESS, JR." to the kind consideration of the critics and the public. Thus saith the editor of the present volume to you, dear reader, and, I trust, not unkind critic.

## *MEMOIR OF H. W. HERBERT.*

BY WILL WILDWOOD.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago there stood on the banks of the Passaic River, midway between Newark and Belleville, N. J., a pleasing and picturesque cottage, of the Mary Tudor style, embowered in foliage and surrounded by tall, thrifty cedars, with avenues and beautiful garden in close proximity. The dwelling, a neat gothic cottage, with mansard roof, was surrounded with piazzas, and by balustrades with which the fragrant untrimmed cedar boughs were thickly interlaced; and the tendrils of flowery vines, creeping in and out among the lattice-work, formed a most romantic and striking scene, which could not fail to attract the beholder. Over the piazza in front might be seen a huge pair of stag antlers, and the bay-window on one side gave a fine view of the Passaic, toward which the green lawn sloped. The little domain was bordered on two sides by the Mount Pleasant Cemetery, which, with the wild scenery adjacent, gave the place a weird appearance, denoting the eccentricity of its owner. Nor was the interior of the dwelling less romantic than its exterior. The neat and well appointed rooms gave token of a master mind. In one of these a well-stocked library gave evidence of the literary tastes of the owner; another, overlooking from the window a long row of dog-kennels, was hung with guns, sabres, fishing-rods, and other implements and trophies of the chase. From a short

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NOTE.—This memoir was originally contributed to the columns of that excellent periodical, "Baldwin's Monthly," for April, 1877, by the editor of the present volume. Several new and important additions have been made and embodied in the sketch, which is presented in this connection as being apropos to the work, and to furnish information upon many points in the literary career of "Frank Forester" which may prove of service to the general reader.

distance there appeared glimpses of a unique gothic cottage "like the wicker-work of a basket filled with flowers and half buried in green, aromatic verdure."

This was the residence of the talented, eccentric and famous writer, scholar and sportsman, HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT, whose sporting works, under the *nom de plume* of "Frank Forster," are known and appreciated wherever the English language is spoken or the gentle science of wood-craft practiced.

The history of this remarkable personage reads almost like a romance, so eventful and distinguished was his career, and so capricious his manner. Born in London, April 7, 1807, of aristocratic parentage—being son of WILLIAM HERBERT, Dean of Manchester, and grandson of the Earl of Carnarvon; educated at Eton College and Cambridge, and surrounded with the refinements of courtly society; endowed by birth and education with a most enviable position,—he forsook all these, home, kindred and station, to carve for himself a fame in the New World.

Arriving in New York City, he enjoyed a few days, or weeks perchance, in sight-seeing, and thence traveled northward into Canada in quest of sport, being an enthusiastic disciple of Nimrod, and passed some time there in shooting and fishing. Here he formed the acquaintance of the accomplished sportsman, Capt. Peel, of Amherstburg, well known to the sporting fraternity of America as "Dinks," one of the authors of a valuable work on "The Dog." From Canada Mr. HERBERT came again to New York City, where his superior education and thorough mastery of the languages secured him a situation as teacher of Greek and Latin in the Classical Academy of R. T. Huddart. His duties occupied but a small portion of his time, and he soon exhibited his proficiency in literature by originating and editing, in conjunction with A. D. Paterson, the "American Monthly Magazine," a periodical which soon became known as one of the most original and ablest sustained, in the classic elegance of its contents, of any magazine of its kind in America. From the time of the establishment of the magazine, in 1832, until he severed his connection with it, three years later, Mr. HERBERT maintained the high literary character of the periodical, often unaided by his co-editor. The magazine afterward passed under the control of

Park Benjamin, and was for a time edited by Charles Fenno Hoffman, a distinguished writer and ardent sportsman.

During this time, he found much leisure for the practice of his favorite field sports, usually visiting the Warwick woodlands, in Orange County, N. Y., where, in company with his devoted friend, Thomas Ward, he enjoyed superb sport among the quail and woodcock. Mr. HERBERT afterward immortalized his friend Ward, presenting him to the sporting public under the transparent alias of "Tom Draw," by which name the memory of Mr. Ward has been enshrined in thousands of grateful hearts. In the immediate vicinity of Newark Mr. HERBERT also found ample use for his gun, in snipe and wild-fowl shooting, and his sporting tales are filled with allusions to the Parsippany Meadows and other resorts near the city of Newark, though he dwells most fondly upon the happy hours spent in the woodlands of Orange County, with his genial friend "Tom Draw." In his fishing tours among the lakes of the Adirondacks, or the clear, cold streams of Canada, HERBERT was usually accompanied by Wm. T. Porter, the accomplished editor of the old "Spirit of the Times," or some other of his many angling friends.

In 1834 the Harper Brothers published Mr. HERBERT's first work, entitled "The Brothers." Although published anonymously, and at the beginning of his literary career, the work was well received, and passed through several editions. Three years later, in 1837, his second work "Cromwell," a tale of the early ages of England's history, was published by the Harpers, and, like the first, proved deservedly popular. It was reissued in England, where it met with much favor. During 1843 another volume from HERBERT's pen was given to the public, entitled "Marimaduke Wyvil; or, The Maid's Revenge." This superb story of the English civil wars passed through fourteen editions in ten years, and was republished in London. "Ringwood, the Rover," and "Guarica, the Carib Bride," spirited novels which were originally published in the magazines, appeared in 1844, and attracted much admiration. "Pierre, the Partisan," a romance, appeared one year later.

H. W. HERBERT's greatest historical romance, "The Roman Traitor," founded on the conspiracy of Cataline, was published

in 1846, and it has been esteemed in many respects the author's ablest work. It is undeniably, in all its details, one of the finest works descriptive of early Roman scenes and characters, of any published in modern times. Eminent critics upon both sides of the Atlantic have pronounced it unsurpassed as a living representation of the manners, customs, and semi-barbaric chivalry which characterized the inhabitants of Ancient Rome.

About this time his first sporting work, "The Warwick Woodlands," which had previously appeared in W. T. Porter's "American Turf Register," was published in New York. With this serial Mr. HERBERT first assumed the *nom de plume* of "Frank Forester," and the work was received with enthusiasm by the fraternity of American sportsmen. The popularity of the work induced the author to prepare another of similar scope, under the title of "My Shooting Box," in 1846, and into this a thread of love and romance was woven, which rendered it more attractive to the general public. "The Miller of Martigne," an attractive and readable novel, was published by Richards & Co., New York, in 1847, and this added considerably to Mr. HERBERT's literary reputation.

In the year 1848 his great sporting work, "Field Sports of the United States and British Provinces of North America," Stringer & Townsend, publishers, was issued in New York city, and was greeted with the warmest enthusiasm throughout the land. As exemplifying the popular character and real merit of this great work, nearly twenty editions have been published since that time, and it is still considered a standard. A memoir of the author appears in the later editions. "Fish and Fishing of the United States and British Provinces," a companion volume to the former, appeared the year following, 1849, and was likewise favorably received by the sportsmen of America. A prominent and pleasing feature of the work consists in its illustrations—about one hundred in number—designed and drawn on wood by the author. Both this work and "Field Sports" were re-published in London, and found much favor among trans-Atlantic as well as American critics. A supplement to "Fish and Fishing" appeared in 1850, and was afterward incorporated with the original work. "Dermot O'Brien; or, The Taking of Tredah,"

a romance from HERBERT's pen, appeared in 1849, and "The Captains of the Old World," a most valuable historical work, in 1851. The latter, and "Captains of the Great Roman Republic," first issued in 1854, may be deemed fine examples of historical works containing the requisite qualities of absorbing interest, pleasing style and strict adherence to facts. The "Cavaliers of England," a collection of historical romances, formerly contributed to the periodicals, and "The Knights of England, France and Scotland," were published by J. S. Redfield, N. Y., in 1852. Mr. HERBERT's "Chevaliers of France," likewise comprising the romance of history, was issued in 1853. In the same year his excellent sporting work, "American Game and its Seasons," with illustrations from designs prepared by himself, was presented to the public in book form, having previously appeared as a serial in "Graham's Magazine." The engravings, conceded to be among the finest in this sphere of art, were prepared by "Forester's" friend, Jos. H. Brightly, an accomplished sportsman. The year 1853 also witnessed the publication of another work from H. W. HERBERT's pen, "The Puritans of New England: a Historical Romance of the Days of Witchcraft," and of an admirable brochure, "The Quorndon Hounds," descriptive of English fox-hunting as pursued at Melton. During 1856 the above sporting tale, together with "The Warwick Woodlands," "My Shooting Box," and "The Deer-stalkers," appeared in one work of two volumes under the title of "Frank Forester's Sporting Scenes and Characters," T. B. Peterson & Bros., publishers, Philadelphia.

Mr. HERBERT's "Persons and Pictures from French and English History" was produced in 1854, and his "Memoirs of Henry VIII and his Six Wives," "The Falls of Wyalusing," and "Sherwood Forest; or, The Wager of Battle," in 1855. Forester's "Complete Manual for the Young Sportsman" was devised in 1856, and his grand work entitled "Horse and Horsemanship of North America," in 1857. Of this superb work the New York Tribune has remarked: "This, perhaps the most elaborate production of its versatile author, combines a vast amount of information from a wide range of authorities, with the results of his own extensive observations and experience in a line of which,

by his personal habits and tastes, he became an accomplished master." The later editions, edited and revised by S. H. and L. C. Bruce, render it the standard treatise of the day on the subject of which it treats. "Hints to Horsekeepers," and "Tricks and Traps of Horsedealers," "Forester's" latest sporting brochures, were published in 1858; and "The Fair Puritan," a work left in manuscript at the time of his death, has been recently issued by Lippincott. "Royal Maries of Medieval History" was also published after the demise of the author.

HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT possessed a capacity for literary labor which was in truth marvelous. While engaged in the preparation of his more elaborate romances and historical works, he continued his contributions to the leading periodicals of the day, and during the twenty-five years of his literary career, there was scarcely a magazine of note to which he did not contribute. In 1836 and 1837 he edited a brilliant annual, "The Magnolia," as original in design as it was successful in execution. For a time he acted upon the editorial corps of the "Courier and Enquirer," for which he wrote reviews and critical essays for a series of years. In 1849 H. W. HERBERT, in conjunction with Colonel Thomas Picton, a gentleman of rare literary attainments, and a former pupil of Mr. HERBERT at Huddart's Classical Academy, devised and edited "The Era," a weekly journal of real merit, which survived only one year. "The Sachem" was established the year following, and was edited by Thomas Picton, H. W. HERBERT, Wm. North, Major Richardson, Captain Bradley, G. G. Foster and Dr. Batchelder. To these journals Mr. HERBERT contributed several entertaining articles. The "Spirit of the Times" was ever a favorite medium through which "Frank Forester" communed with the sporting fraternity, and "The Knickerbocker Magazine," "Ladies' Companion," "Godey's Lady's Book," "Colman's Monthly," "Sartain's Magazine," "The Literary World," and "The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine," were the receptacles of many bright gems from his pen. "Graham's Magazine," however, secured Mr. HERBERT as a regular contributor when first originated in 1841, and during the next fifteen years his articles formed a special feature of that excellent periodical. To this magazine he contributed poems,

novelettes, sporting tales and learned essays. "Frank Forester" also wrote several articles upon sporting subjects for the pages of the "Democratic Review," and the columns of the "Southern Military Gazette" and "Porter's Spirit" were enriched by the scintillations of his pen. To the latter he contributed a beautiful sporting romance entitled "Oneemees, the Pigeon of the Ojibwas," beginning with the initial number of that journal, and ending with the completion of volume one.

Besides his fugitive writings, "Frank Forester" edited a collection of sporting sketches from the pen of his departed friend J. Cypress, Jr., in 1842, with the title of "Sporting Scenes and Sundry Sketches." In 1853 he edited an American edition of Maj. Walter Campbell's "Old Forest Ranger," a delightful work descriptive of wild sport in the Orient; and in 1856 Forester performed the same office for "Sponge's Sporting Tour," a keen satire or burlesque upon would-be sporting characters. Dinks, Mayhew and Hutchinson's standard work upon "The Dog," was edited by "Frank Forester" in 1857, and published by W. A. Townsend.

Mr. HERBERT's translations deserve particular attention, as being among the most difficult yet ablest executed of his literary labors. His translation of "Goldsmith's History of Greece," "The Prometheus and Agamemnon of Æschylus," and "Weiss' Protestant Refugees," have received the largest meed of approbation from classical critics, and his faithful translations of Alexander Dumas' "Diana of Meridor" and "Acte of Corinth," as well as "The Wandering Jew," "Matilda," "Atar Gul," "John Cavalier," and "The Salamander," of Eugene Sue, are pronounced the best of our time. In this sphere Mr. HERBERT's attainments as a classical scholar are seen to best advantage. His "Prometheus" especially, which was undertaken to while away the winter evenings at "The Cedars," has been admired by the most thorough scholars and the *literati* upon both sides of the Atlantic.

A competent writer has estimated that the fugitive writings of HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT, together with his published works, would form more than two hundred volumes. This, too, when a large portion of his time each autumn and spring was passed in

the field with rod or gun; and when it is taken into consideration that his time was further circumscribed by other duties, some idea may be gained of this marvel of literary industry. When engaged with his pen in his study, he wrote rapidly, and by steady application, even after the midnight hour, accomplished wonders. His penmanship was clear and distinct as copper-plate almost, and remarkably free from blot or erasure, and even in his private correspondence the same care and attention was exhibited.

In one of his sporting tours through Maine HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT formed the acquaintance of Miss Sarah Barker, a beautiful and accomplished young lady, daughter of the then mayor of Bangor, and in 1839 he brought her to the hymeneal altar, a willing bride. The talented author and his lovely wife enjoyed a few years only of mutual happiness, when she died of a pulmonary affection, leaving him doubly desolate, as his severance from home and country had been complete. He removed from New York to Newark in 1845, and under his direction was erected the beautiful cottage home upon the Passaic, which he christened "The Cedars," and its association with his memory is as marked as is "Sunnyside" with that of Washington Irving, "Idlewild" with N. P. Willis, or "Otsego Hall" with the literary fame of J. Fennimore Cooper. It is said that for a number of years after the death of his wife Mr. HERBERT allowed but one ornament to adorn the wall of his study, namely, a portrait of his heart's idol, painted by the immortal Henry Inman; and upon certain anniversaries the bereaved sporting author would stand for hours gazing upon this memento, giving way to the most intense grief and weeping bitterly as a child at the remembrance of his few happy years and the sad reflection upon his great bereavement. H. W. HERBERT resided at his hermitage in comparative seclusion, seldom courting society, yet maintaining in his pretty domain a sort of English hospitality with his friends, whom he would entertain in the best style his means would permit. Being of a chivalrous and courtly bearing he was styled "The Lord of 'The Cedars,'" a title in itself appropriate, though it was applied in derision by his enemies.

In personal appearance\* MR. HERBERT was above the medium height, symmetrical and powerful in form, with a pleasing manner when in his more happy moods, which could not fail to attract the attention of a casual observer. His eyes were bright and searching; his features, though regular and attractive, betokened a firm will and strong passions. He usually wore a heavy and luxuriant moustache, and a profusion of brown hair was "coolly disparted from his white unwrinkled forehead." Mr. HERBERT was undeniably pleasing in form and feature, and this, combined with his eccentric manner, made him a man of mark wherever seen. His wonderful wealth of classic lore, his knowledge of ancient and modern literature, his proficiency in all that pertained to out-door sports and athletic pastimes, rendered him an agreeable companion alike in the field or in the study. Few who met him ever forgot the striking appearance, and still more remarkable conversational ability of the sporting author. "Gloan," well known to the sportsmen of the present day as one of the most pleasing and forcible sporting writers of the time, alludes with feeling to the sense of awe and admiration with which, upon one or two occasions in his youth, he gazed upon "Frank Forester." A veteran sportsman, best known to the sporting public under the pseudonym of "Witch Hazel Bud," pleasantly delineates the early impressions received in shooting with "Forester" on the Jersey meadows, where the sporting outfit, no less than the thorough knowledge of sportsmanship exhibited by the immortal disciple of Nimrod, awakened the admiration and wonder of the whole country side. "HARRY" HERBERT, as he was familiarly termed by his intimate friends, approached nearer to the model of a true sportsman, and *beau ideal* of a sporting author, than any gentleman of the age, not

\* The portrait of H. W. HERBERT in the first volume of his "Field Sports of the United States and British Provinces" is little better than a mere caricature. It has been pronounced by his acquaintances a base libel upon his manly features, and the gifted "Acorn" asserts: "It is no more like HERBERT than is a horse to a horse-chestnut." The most accurate likeness of "Our Frank" is the photograph by Zimmerman Bros., St. Paul, Minn., reproduced from a portrait by Meade, the last for which Mr. HERBERT ever sat. This is a faithful and finely-executed likeness of "Frank Forester"—a "counterfeit presentment" which it is a delight to gaze upon.

excepting the world-renowned Apperley, or "Nimrod," whose famous sporting works have been considered matchless by his admirers. Mr. HERBERT is excellently represented in the fictitious character who figures so conspicuously and pleasingly in his sporting tales as "Harry Archer," who was beyond a doubt given as the author's idea of a perfect sportsman. That he, the author, excelled in athletic and field sports, is not so much a matter of surprise when we reflect that his youth and early manhood was passed among scenes and associations well calculated to foster and strengthen his sporting proclivities, his father, the Dean of Manchester, being an accomplished and enthusiastic sportsman; and the varied experience in shooting and fishing throughout England and America, combined with the scholastic attainments of Mr. HERBERT,\* comprise a category of acquirements such as we may scarcely hope to see reproduced in a sporting writer.

The later years of HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT's life are enveloped in a maze of brilliant achievements and correspondingly bitter disappointments, until his naturally proud and self-reliant spirit was bowed and finally crushed by weight of sorrow. His alienation from home and country doubtless depressed him greatly after the loss of his wife, by whom he had a son, who was sent to England to be educated, and the loneliness of his situation became still more irksome as the years passed and middle-age was reached, arousing anew his longing for home ties. During the winter of 1858 Mr. HERBERT met a young lady of beauty and reputed wealth, Miss Adela R. Budlong, of Providence, Rhode Island, and after a brief acquaintance of three weeks, the twain were married in Newark. For a time all went "merry as a marriage-bell," and the sporting author was even more assiduous than before in his literary labors. But a few

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\* The most complete and spirited record of "Frank Forester's" literary career is, beyond a doubt, the unique serial by a pleasing and able writer bearing the pseudonym of "Toxophilus. This serial was published in Volume 5 of the "Chicago Field," under the title of "Foresterian Bibliography," and contains, besides a number of fine selections from HERBERT's fugitive writings, a judicious description of his works and literary labors; being, in short, a graphic delineation of HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT's life as an author. For his careful and well-directed labors in this direction, "Toxophilus" deserves the thanks of every lover of American sporting literature.

malicious gossips, during his brief absence from home, seized upon the opportunity to poison his wife's mind against him by relating garbled versions of his dissipation and mode of life. The slander so influenced the credulous young bride that she determined to live no longer with her husband, who was shocked and unmanned upon his return to find her estranged. Long, though vainly, he endeavored to call back the alienated affection of her whom he loved so passionately; but she refused a reconciliation, and when he learned through his lawyer in New York that she had taken steps to procure a divorce in Indiana, his mind was shattered, and about two o'clock on the morning of May 17, 1858, just three months after his last marriage, the unfortunate author shot himself to the heart, in his room at the Stevens House, New York City. Besides a few letters to intimate friends, he left a communication to the coroner, and one to the press of the United States, explaining his motives for the deed, and also charitably exonerating his wife from all blame. The sad news of his tragic death spread with electric rapidity, and many were the compassionate and regretful comments of the public press upon his untimely demise. "Acorn," a devoted friend and able writer, penned a touching tribute to his memory, and by an eloquent appeal checked the unfeeling and malicious criticisms of those who had imbibed an enmity against HERBERT while living, and seized upon this opportunity to gratify a contemptible motive of revenge.

After the death of HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT, "The Cedars" remained for some time unoccupied, and the dwelling, with its wild, weird surroundings and melancholy associations, soon became known as "the haunted house of Newark." Little children passed the spot with feelings of awe, and many averred that in the still twilight or deep, sombre darkness, strange, mysterious noises issued from the desolate dwelling, lights flitted to and fro through the tenantless rooms, and the wide-spreading cedars moaned and sighed in mournful cadence. This, of course, was only superstitious hallucination, due to the romantic interest connected with the spot and the proximity of the cemetery grounds. Years ago the dwelling burned to the ground, and scarce a vestige remains of a place hallowed in the memory of

all American sportsmen. The ruins have been mostly removed to enlarge the cemetery boundaries, and the clinging vines upon the crumbling ruins, and a few cedars, only remain to mark the spot where once lived one of the most versatile, talented and eccentric of authors on the American continent. The tomb of the unfortunate writer and sportsman, which occupies a central location in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery, was for many years unmarked by stone or tablet which might serve to mark his last resting-place to the wayfarer who sought it; but during the Centennial year, on the eighteenth anniversary of Mr. HERBERT's burial, the citizens of Newark placed at his head a suitable memorial, as a token of his worth and the high esteem in which he was held by his fellow citizens.

# THE GAME OF NORTH AMERICA;

ITS NOMENCLATURE, HABITS, HAUNTS AND SEASONS, WITH  
HINTS ON THE SCIENCE OF WOODCRAFT.

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BY FRANK FORESTER.

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## . I.

THERE is, perhaps, no country in the world which presents to the sportsman so long a catalogue of the choicest game, whether of fur, fin or feather, as the United States of North America; there is none, probably, which counts more numerous or more ardent devotees; there is none, certainly, in which the wide-spread passion for the chase can be indulged under so few restrictions, and at so trifling an expense.

Yet, all this notwithstanding, it is to be regretted greatly that there is no country in which the nomenclature of these *feræ naturæ*, these roving denizens of wood, wold and water, is so confused and unscientific; none in which their habits are so little known and their seasons so little regarded; none in which the gentle craft of venerie is so often degraded into mere pot-hunting; and in which, as a natural consequence, the game that swarmed of yore in all the fields and forests, in all the lakes, streams, bays and creeks of its vast territory, are in such peril of becoming speedily extinct.

That in a nation every male inhabitant of which is, with but rare exceptions, a hunter, and ready with the gun almost beyond

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This series of sketches was contributed to the pages of the "Democratic Review," in 1845-6, by "Frank Forester," and forms the nucleus of his delightful "Field Sports." Several passages of the articles presented in the serial have been incorporated in that work, but the repetition of such portions will no doubt be pardoned by the reader, viewing its interest as a whole.—ED.

example, this should be the case, can be explained only by the fact that, as I have said before, little is known generally of the habits of game; and that the rarest and choicest are slaughtered inconsiderately, not perhaps wantonly, at such times, and in such manners, as are rapidly causing them to disappear and become extinct.

That such is the case, can be proved in a few words, and by reference to few examples, the most evident perhaps of which is the absolute extinction of that noble bird, the heath-hen, or *pinnated grouse*, on Long Island, where within the memory of our elder sportsmen they might be taken in abundance at the proper season, but where not a solitary bird has been seen for years. In the pines on the southern shores of New Jersey, and in the oak-barrens of northeastern Pennsylvania, the same birds were also plentiful within a few years; but now they are indeed *rara aves*; and after a few more returns of the rapidly succeeding seasons, they will be no more known in their old-accustomed places.

The destruction of this, the finest of our gallinaceous game, is to be attributed wholly, in all the districts I have enumerated, to the same cause, the havoc made among them at periods when a little knowledge of their habits would protect them from the most ruthless pot-hunter; the season, I mean, when they are occupied in laying, hatching, or rearing their young broods, during which to kill the parent ensures the loss of the whole hatching—cruelly famished orphans; a veritable illustration of the fable which holds up to contempt and laughter the slayer of the goose which laid the eggs of gold.

In all the European countries, writers on all branches of sporting have long abounded; many of them high of birth, many of them distinguished in the world of science or of letters, some even of the gentler sex. The greatest chemist of his day, Sir Humphrey Davy, was not ashamed to record his piscatory experiences in "Salmonia," a work second only in freshness and attraction to its prototype by old Izaak Walton. That fair and gentle dame, Juliana Berners, deemed it not an unfeminine task to indite what, to the present day, is the text-book of falconry; and hapless, beautiful Jane Grey thought she had given the

extremest praise to Plato's eloquence when she preferred it to the music of the hounds in the wild greenwood. But, till within the last few years, America has found no son to record the feats of her bold and skillful hunters; to build theories on the results of their experience; to plead the cause of her persecuted and almost exterminated game.

Within the last few years, however, much has been done. A whole host of sporting writers have sprung up in all quarters of the land, having their rendezvous and rallying point in the columns of the "Spirit of the Times."

Most of these writers have aspired, indeed, rather to entertain than to instruct; rather to depict scenes and incidents to the life, than to draw from those scenes a moral and a theory. How amply they have succeeded, I need not say to those who are acquainted with the writings of N., of Arkansas; Tom Owen, the Bee Hunter; Dr. Henry, of Quebec; J. Cypress, Jr., of New York; and others whose name is legion; but to those who are ignorant of this, perhaps the most original branch of our national literature, I may be allowed to say that it is to be surpassed in its own line in no European language; and that Nimrod, Hawker, Beckford and Tolfrey, of English notoriety, would lose none of their laurels by being compared to the least excellent of these writers.

I have myself long felt a humble pride in being able to subscribe myself as one of the earliest laborers in this fruitful vineyard, ever endeavoring to blend with such incidents and anecdotes as my poor skill might devise for the amusement of my readers, some facts ascertained by a long experience of field sports, both here and in other lands; and some pleas in behalf as well of the gentle science itself as of the wild animals which it teaches us alike how to pursue and slay when *in*, and how to spare when *out of season*.

So much has been already accomplished by the efforts of many among those whom I have named, and so well am I convinced that the most excellent results may be obtained, as relating to the preservation of our game, from a wider dissemination of facts connected with its habits, haunts and seasons, that I have embraced with real pleasure the opportunity of presenting

my views to the numerous readers of a work holding so high a character as this review, as many persons may be induced to pay some attention to papers from respect to their medium, which they might not have been led into the way of reading had they appeared in a purely sporting periodical.

With these few general remarks, I shall plunge at once *in medias res*, commencing my series on the Game of North America with the bird dearest to the thorough sportsman.

### THE WOODCOCK,

*Scolopax Minor*, as he is judiciously termed by naturalists, to distinguish him from his European brother, *Scopolax Rusticola*, which is above one-third larger and heavier in the ratio of sixteen to nine, the mud snipe, blind snipe, or big-headed snipe, as he is variously called in various parts of the country, may be termed an amphibious bird, and is nearly allied to the waders. He haunts woodland streams and swamps; sunny hillsides covered with saplings, if contiguous to wet feeding grounds; wide meadows interspersed with tufts of alders or willows; and at times, and in peculiar districts, open and grassy marshes, quite destitute of underwood or timber.

With us, of the Northern States, he is a summer bird of passage, as he may be termed with propriety; although he pays us his annual visit early in spring; sometimes, in open seasons, before the last moon of winter has waned her snowy round, and defers his departure until the very end of autumn. In the Southern States, on the contrary, he is found only during the short and genial winter, quitting them altogether during the overpowering heats, which our water-loving friend finds unendurable. In reply to a question which I propounded some years since to the readers of the New York "Turf Register," "whether in soft and sheltered situations of the most northern of the Southern States, the woodcock may not be found throughout the year," I was informed by an anonymous correspondent that among the higher valleys of the Appalachian chain such is the case throughout the southern portion of that great ridge; and

that in the northern parts of Virginia especially they are to be taken at all seasons of the year. For this fact, however, I cannot vouch on my own knowledge, and, indeed, I am somewhat doubtful of its correctness. I prefer, therefore, to consider it as everywhere migratory; and of its migrations I shall speak hereafter, premising only that they are but partially understood as yet, that much mystery is connected with them, and that their circumstances are as interesting as they are curious.

To describe minutely a bird so well known throughout the length and breadth of the cultivated portions of North America—for it is a singular fact that he is never found in the wilderness, following everywhere the skirts of civilization—would be a work, it should seem, of supererogation. I shall say a few words, however, of his general appearance, in order to indicate the very bird I mean to my readers, beyond the possibility of a mistake; for mistakes are indeed possible, owing, as I have observed, to the confused nomenclature of game prevailing in this country; and of this I am a good witness, as I was once dragged up to the summit of one of the highest hills in Orange County, New York, by the reiterated assertions of a very intelligent lad, a farmer's son in the vicinity, that he could show me more than fifty woodcock in that unusual and remote spot; the woodcock proving, when I had climbed the ridge, breathless and spent, on a broiling July day, to be large red-headed *woodpeckers!* utterly worthless either for sport or for the table, and no more like to *Scolopax Minor* than was Hyperion to a Satyr.

This beautiful bird, then, varying in weight, when full grown, from eight to eleven ounces—I have heard of but one instance of his exceeding the latter—is about thirteen inches in length, measured from the tip of the bill to the extremity of the toes, the bill alone exceeding one-fourth of the whole length, and eighteen in breadth, from tip to tip of the expanded wings. The curious instrument by which he obtains all his nourishment is of a highly polished, horny substance, stout at the base, and tapering gradually to the tip, where the upper mandible, projecting considerably beyond the lower, is terminated in a knot of exquisite delicacy and sensibility. The head is somewhat triangular in shape, with the large, full black eye—constructed, as is

the case of all birds which fly or feed by night, so as to catch and concentrate every ray of light—situate nearer the apex, or crown, than in any other bird; a peculiarity which, added to the unusual size of the head, gives a foolish and clumsy air to this otherwise beautiful little fowl. The brow of the adult bird is of a grayish white, gradually darkening until it reaches the crown, where it is shaded into the richest black. The whole hinder parts, from the neck downward to the tail, are exquisitely barred and variegated with a thousand minute wavy lines of black, ash color, cinnabar brown and umber, the tail-feathers having a broad band of black close to their extremities, and beyond this a tip of snowy whiteness. The chin is white, but the throat and breast, nearly as far as the insertion of the thighs, are of a warm yellowish chestnut; the vent and thighs white. The legs, in the young birds, are of an olive green; in the adults, of a pale flesh color. There is no distinction of plumage, that I have been able to discover, between the sexes; nor has any been detected, so far as I am aware, on dissection; and the only difference between the young and old birds, size and weight excepted, is the change in the color of the legs, and the increased whiteness of the forehead.

This interesting bird is rarely or never seen by day, unless by those who are especially in pursuit of him; and by them even he is found with difficulty, unless when hunted with well broken dogs. At nightfall, however, he may often be seen on the wing, darting athwart the gloom from the dry upland coverts, in which at many seasons he loves to lie, toward his wet feeding grounds. During the hours of darkness he is on the alert constantly; by night he seeks his food; by night he makes his long and direct migrations, choosing for this latter purpose foggy weather, at or about the full of the moon.

By day he lies snugly ensconced in some lonely brake, among long grass and fern, under the shade of the dark alder or silvery willow, and near to some marshy level or muddy streamlet's brink during the summer; but in the autumn, on some dry, westering hillside, clothed with dense second-growth and saplings.

In very quiet spots, especially where the covert overhead is dense and shadowy, he sometimes feeds by day; and it has been my fortune once or twice to come upon him unsuspected when

so engaged, and to watch him for many minutes probing the soft loam, which he loves the best, with his long bill, and drawing forth his succulent food, from the smallest red wire-worm to the largest lob-worm suitable for the angler's bait when fishing for perch or the yellow bass of the lakes.

It is by the abundance of this food that his selection of haunts is dictated, and his choice of season, in some considerable degree, controlled. On sandy and hungry soils, as that of Long Island for example, he is found rarely in comparison, and never in the large congregations which so rejoice the heart of the sportsman in more favored localities. Still more does he eschew sour marsh land and peat bogs, wherein, by the way, the worm he most affects hardly exists; while on fat loamy bottom lands, whether the color of the soil be red or black, rich with decomposed vegetable matter, he may be found in swarms.

It must be understood, however, that after the young brood have left the parent birds, which departure occurs after the first moult, the woodcock is a solitary bird, acting and moving for himself alone, although the same causes may draw hundreds of them into one neighborhood, and never flying in flocks, or associating in any way with his fellows, unless in the breeding season.

Woodcock arrive among us, in the Middle and Northern States, from Pennsylvania so far eastward as to the western counties of Maine, almost simultaneously, in February or March, according to the earliness or openness of the season—often before the snow is off the ground. They arrive paired already, and immediately set about the duties of incubation.

The nest is rude and inartificial, consisting merely of a hollow in the ground, with a few straws or rushes carelessly gathered round it, the bill of the old bird doubtless proving an awkward implement for nidification. This nest is made, if made it can be said to be, under the shelter of a reedy tussock or stunted bush, on the verge of large wet meadows; and should the season be dry early, enabling the birds to sit on low ground, and should a sudden flood ensue, numbers of broods are destroyed; a casualty from which I do not consider them secure until the beginning of June at least, when, in an early season, the young birds are able to shift for themselves.

In such a nest, and in such situations, the woodcock lays from two to six bluish eggs, irregularly blotched with brown. How long the process of incubation continues, I have not been able accurately to ascertain; but I have seen the old birds sitting so early as the tenth of March, yet never have seen young birds able to fly earlier than the middle of May.

The ordinary number of a hatching is four birds, and if the first brood gets off early, the parents immediately proceed to a second incubation; the male bird in this case taking care of the first brood until the second gets off, when all associate together until after the moulting season, when all ties are dissolved, and they know thenceforth neither kindred nor kindness.

I am aware that the fact of the woodcock rearing two broods in the same season has been disputed, but I am thoroughly satisfied of the fact, having repeatedly killed six and eight youngsters, and those of different sizes, with but one couple of old birds; and that, too, in places so small as to render it next to impossible that any should have remained unsprung, and on occasions when every bird sprung has been brought to bag.

A stronger proof than this I can adduce, involving, too, a pleasant anecdote concerning the maternal affection of this usually deemed stupid bird:

A few years since—I think it was in 1841\*—there was a deep fall of snow, covering the greater part of the state of New York, near eighteen inches deep, so late as the twelfth or fifteenth of May. It thawed, of course, immediately, and produced a complete inundation, the early spring having been rather uncommonly dry. From this I augured ill for the prospects of the shooting season. But fine weather followed, and by most persons the spring snow-storm and freshet were forgotten.

\* In quoting this in his superb work a few years later, "Frank Forester" introduces it with the following apt remarks: "This anecdote was published by me some two or three years since, in the columns of a leading monthly magazine, in connection with a number of remarks concerning the habits of the woodcock, on some of which I have since been led to alter my opinion. I was, at that time, inclined to believe that the parent birds retained several broods of young, of different sizes, about them; but I am satisfied that this view of the case was erroneous, and was induced by the accident of two or more broods having come in contact, as is perpetually the case on well-stocked ground, under the care of only one parent bird each."

On the first of July I went with a friend, a good shot and eager sportsman, to a favorite shooting ground in Orange County, New York, on part of which—for it had a very large range, and contained many varieties of lying—we had bagged in the previous year a hundred and twenty-five birds in a single day's shooting.

We shot the first day on the low meadows, and killed hardly any birds—not, to the best of my recollection, above ten or a dozen, in a severe day's walking. They were well-grown birds, but not a single old one in the number. My companion, greatly annoyed, insisted that the ground had been hunted before that season, and all the birds killed off except the handful we had found. From this conclusion I dissented, arguing that if such had been the case, we should have found old birds, the young being the easier both to find and to kill, especially for cockney sportsmen, who alone may be presumed to hunt before that season. My friend grew almost angry, and asked me, "Where, then, are the birds?" I answered, "Wait till to-morrow evening, when we shall have beat our other ground, and I will tell you."

The next day we did beat the other ground; wet swales, and sloping woods of small extent in valleys watered by little streamlets from the hills. The result was the same, a wretched day's sport, and no old birds, or at least hardly any.

As usual, each held his own position. My friend again asked, "How do you account for this?" I replied, "All the young broods have been destroyed by the freshet, except the very few which got off before the May flood. This accounts for the fewness of the birds, and for the uncommon size of those few. The old birds are now hatching their second broods on the ridges and hillsides. I will show you that I am right, to-morrow." And to-morrow I did show him that the ridges and sapling coverts—sprouts, as the country people call them—were full of old birds *hovering*, and no young ones.

Still my companion was incredulous as to the second broods, until in the afternoon, as I was passing through a little clump of alders, not above two or three yards square, I flushed a bird, which flew out to him. He fired. I called out to inquire whether he had killed, and as he answered "yes," I heard the bird flapping its wings on the ground, in the death-struggle, as I imagined.

Knowing that he could recover the bird in the open ground, I beat out the thicket thoroughly, and left it, satisfied that it contained no other bird, though I had some difficulty in getting one of my setters away from what I supposed to be a field-mouse. On joining my friend, he told me that the bird had flapped up, when he was in the act of laying his hand upon it, and had staggered away, seeming every moment on the point of falling, so that he did not care to fire at it again, until it had got out of shot; but that he had marked it down to a yard, in a thick brush fence, three or four hundred yards away. On going to the place, the dogs took the scent readily; but while they were trailing it, the bird rose, a hundred yards off, flapping and staggering about, as if severely hurt, and flew some three or four hundred yards farther from the thicket in which we first started it, and dropped again in a piece of thick hill-side coppice. I marked the bird accurately by the top of a pine tree, and off we set in pursuit, I more than half suspecting that the bird was unwounded. Scarce had we entered the covert, when up whizzed the identical bird, fresh and sound, from the very brake in which I had marked him, and away like a bullet through the tree-tops. So thoroughly convinced was I, that, though I could have killed the bird with ease, I would not fire at it; but, to convince my still doubting friend, we walked back to the little tuft in which we first sprung the cock, he promising not to fire if we should again flush her. My dogs were not well in the alders before the bird rose again, and was going away at her best pace, when my friend's shot stopped her, to my infinite disgust. He is a very quick shot, and in the excitement of the moment forgot everything except the game and the fury of pursuit.

Almost at the same moment, old Chance—he was the best retriever I ever saw in any country—picked up from the spot where I had supposed he was snuffing after a field-mouse, a young downy, unfledged woodcock, less than two inches long.

Chance was the finest retriever I ever saw, broke by Mike Sandford, of Newark, and would carry a hurt bird by the tip of his wing, without ruffling a feather; and though it will hardly be believed, I took the little fledgling from his mouth unharmed,

and had the satisfaction of seeing him run away briskly, and hide himself behind a dock leaf.

That day we shot no more, nor indeed that summer; but before we left Orange County, I went again to the same brake,—with the old dog, but without a gun,—and flushed what I presumed to have been the male bird, which, by its simulated crippled flight, again drawing me away from the spot, convinced me that he was watching over his motherless little ones.

Had I needed anything to convince me that woodcock ought not to be shot in July, that scene would have convinced me; and since that day I have never ceased to advocate a change and simplification of our game laws, which should prohibit the killing of woodcock until the first day of October; and make that one day the end of close time for all game whatever, except the ruffed grouse, commonly called pheasant, or partridge, the reason for which exception I shall give under the head of that fine bird, when I reach him in his turn.

I am satisfied that this change should be made; because the parent birds do not cease from sitting until the commencement of the moultling season, that is, about the first of August, when they disappear for a while, migrating, as some believe, yet farther northward, or, as I fancy, moving to the difficult mountain tops, and scattering themselves among the little swales and gulleys which intersect them. This is the first grand reason, and is in itself all-sufficient; for as close time is only adopted for the protection of the brooding birds, it should, of course, continue until the broods are out of danger.

A second reason is scarce less valid: that not one-tenth part of the young birds, killed in July, are half grown, and consequently afford little sport to the shooter, and are, comparatively speaking, valueless on the table.

A third may be found in the extreme heat of July weather, which renders the sport a toil both to man and dog, and makes it impossible to bring home the game in a state fit to be eaten, even on the day which sees it killed.

Last, not least, the law, as it now stands, can hardly be enforced, so difficult is it to limit men to this or that day, when it appears to be a mere arbitrary distinction. Prohibit the killing

of the bird at all during his spring and summer visit; strictly punish those who vend him during that period; let the cause of the prohibition be made thoroughly public, and you will enlist the now law-breakers in the cause of law-protection.

No danger of their anticipating the first of October by a few days or weeks, for this simple reason, that before that day the bird has not returned from his summer rustication, and, consequently, is not there to be killed.

These views I submit humbly, but with full conviction of their justice, to all sportsmen and friends of sporting; and earnestly do I entreat them to give them a fair consideration, if they would save the woodcock from the fate of the heath-hen—expatriation and extinction.

In my next paper I shall treat this question somewhat more fully, as connected with the short moulting migration, with autumn, or, technically, *fall* shooting; with the use and breaking of the dog; and with what will perhaps be new to some of my readers, the fire-hunting of the South, as applied to winged game, and shooting on the wing.

THE CEDARS, Nov. 22, 1845.

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## II.

### THE WOODCOCK.

THE year has now arrived at the first week of August, and the earth is scourged with almost intolerable heat. The dwellers of large cities are all on the wing for the fresh breezes of the Atlantic coast, for the mineral springs among the cold and quiet mountains, for the snug farm-houses in some green and shady vale.

Many of these, sportsmen in their own conceit, and that only, go forth encumbered with their Purdeys, or their Mantons, and accompanied by their high-bred and well-broke dogs, in the vain

hope of finding sport in the moist woodlands or the marshy meadows, that shall relieve the tedium consequent on change from the stirring habits, and the bustle of dense streets, to the monotonous tranquillity and calmness of the country.

In the *vain* hope, I said. And wherefore *vain*? methinks I hear the reader ask, unlearned in the mysteries of wood and river.

Vain hope, dear friend, because, of all the months in the woodland year, this burning month of August is the most barren, to the gentle sportsman, of all legitimate occupation. No species of seasonable game is to be found, in this month, in sufficient numbers to render its pursuit exciting; while the fierce heat of the summer sun renders his sportive labor toilsome to the man; and the lack of game is apt to produce carelessness, headstrongness, and disobedience to command, in his four-footed comrade.

It is for these good reasons, that the gun of the genuine sportsman hangs idle on the antlers in his hall, with pouch, and flask, and empty game-bag at its side, during this weary month; while his employment in the field is limited to keeping his dogs in exercise, and to preparing them by steady house breaking, for the sport of the more genial autumn.

During this month of August, the English snipe, having withdrawn from our latitudes in June, is luxuriating in the Arctic regions of Labrador and scarce thawed Greenland. The quail is protected by wise laws, rearing her first bevy, if the season has been cold and backward; her second, if the times have been times of promise to the expectant sportsman. The ruffed grouse is protected likewise; but, as I think, improperly, holding, myself, this month to be the fittest of the twelve for his legitimate and pleasant slaughter. The woodcock, too, our own woodcock, our present topic of discourse, hath departed,—vanished from his haunts of last month, for a season,—not to be found of dogs, or shot of men, until crisp frosts shall have embrowned the meadows —until the maple shall have changed his leafy green for hectic crimson.

It is strange that no naturalist should have noticed this brief migration; for none have done so—none, at least, of whose writings I am cognizant. It is scarcely less strange, that until very recently even sportsmen, who knew and perceived the sudden

disappearance of the bird, should have doubted or denied the fact of its migration at this period.

When first I began to sport in this country, some fifteen years ago, there were two theories current among sportsmen, whereby to account for the fact that in woods where the birds swarmed in July, he was hardly to be found in August. Both theories, as I have proved thoroughly to my own satisfaction, are absurd and futile.

The first was this: That the bird did not, in truth, disappear at all, but remained on his old ground; though, owing to the fact of his being in moult, he gave out no scent whereby the dog could detect him; and from sickness, or inability to fly with his wonted velocity, refused to rise before the tread of his intruding enemy, the man.

This theory is answered, in a word. The woodcock, while in moult, *does* give out as much scent, *is* pointed as readily by dogs, *does* rise as willingly before the frosts, and *is* as good upon the table, as at any other season; facts which are easily proved, since, although the great mass of birds withdraw during August, and do not return before October, a few do still tarry in their old swamps, and may be found and shot; though so few in number, and at so great an expense of time and labor, as to render the pursuit of them toilsome, and productive only of weariness and disappointment.

I have, however, killed them repeatedly, while endeavoring to satisfy myself of the facts which I now assert, so deep in the moult that their bodies have been almost naked, and that they have fluttered up feebly and with a heavy whirring, on wings divested of one half the quill-feathers; and in that state I have observed that the dogs stood as staunchly, and at as great a distance from their game, as usual; and that the birds took wing as freely, though, in truth, half impotent to fly.

The other theory was this—which I have heard insisted on as strenuously as the former: That the woodcock, on beginning to moult, betakes himself to the maize, or Indian corn fields, and remains there unsuspected until the crops have been housed, and the cold weather has set in.

That a few scattered woodcock may be found in wet, low maize fields, along the edge of woods, is true; and it is true, also, that they feed in such situations in great numbers, *during the night*, previous to their removal; but that they are ever to be found generally, or for any number of consecutive days or weeks, in such ground, is an utterly incorrect surmise, disproved by long experience.

I have applied myself carefully to the investigation of this circumstance; and in the last ten years have certainly beaten a thousand maize fields thoroughly, with a brace of as good setters as any private gentleman possessed, at the very period when farmers would tell me "they were as thick as fowls in the corn fields"; and I have not on any occasion flushed more than three birds in any one field; nor have I killed twenty-five on such ground altogether.

I think the reader will admit that the two theories alluded to above are, by these facts, indisputably controverted.

And now I must expect that it will be inquired of me, "Whither, then, do they go? what becomes of them?" to which sage questions it is, I grieve to say, my fate to be unable to make satisfactory reply. I was formerly inclined to believe that when the moult is at hand, the woodcock withdraws to the small upland runnels and boggy streamlets which are to be found everywhere among our hills or mountains. That the moulting season is the signal for dispersion, and the termination of all family ties between the young and old birds, is certain. From this time forth, until the next February brings round the pairing time, the woodcock, whether found singly in a solitary place, or among scores of his kind, is still a lonely and ungregarious bird, coming and going at his own pleasure, without reference—undemocratic rascal—to the will of the majority.

In corroboration of this view of the absence of our bird during the early autumn, I was once informed by a gentleman whose word I have no reason to disbelieve, that on ascending once to the summit of Bull Hill, one of the loftiest of the highlands of the Hudson, with the intent of showing the fine view thence to a city friend, he found the brushwood on the barren and rocky ledges, and even on the crown of the hill, literally alive with

woodcock. This occurred, according to his statement, in the beginning of September, when no birds were to be found in the level and wet woods below. He further stated that he at first intended to revisit the hill the next day, with dog and gun, in order to profit by his discovery, but was prevented doing so by casual circumstances, until the frost had set in keenly in the woods. He then climbed the hill, and beat it carefully with dogs, without obtaining one point to reward his labor; and on the next day found the swamps below full of birds.

Not vouching for the truth of this tale, I tell it as 'twas told to me. The teller was a sportsman, and a man of average veracity—that is to say, I should have been inclined to believe any fact he stated, where I could see no interest on his part which should lead him to attempt deception. In this case there was no such reason; not even the desire of prevailing in argument, for we were not arguing. I cannot, therefore, well doubt the correctness of his information.

If truly stated, as I believe it to have been, this fact makes somewhat for my former opinion. I have also myself frequently found scattered birds on such hill tops, and in such mountain-swales, while deer-stalking, in August and September, though not in numbers which would justify the belief in a general migration *en masse* to such localities.

If, however, my half-formed opinion,—for it is no more,—be correct, the birds are dispersed at this period of the year, and are only to be found, casually, in knots of three or four, and never in greater numbers.

The other, and on the whole, perhaps more probable suggestion, is this: That, after rearing their young, driven by the heat of the weather, or, it may be, by the temporary exhaustion of food on their favorite grounds, they move farther northward, as does the English snipe yet earlier in the season, not to return until the premature cold of northern Canada drives them back, to tarry with us a few months on their way southward.

Should this prove to be the case, the woodcock, instead of being termed with us a summer bird of passage, must be regarded as a spring and autumnal visitant, like his congener, the snipe; with this difference, that the snipe rarely breeds with us, going

northward to nidificate, while his fellow emigrant, our *scolopax*, invariably rears his young before going farther toward the frosts of the northern pole.

Of these suggestions my readers must judge whether is the better of the two; one of the two I believe to be the only way for accounting for the woodcock's short disappearance at this season. For the rest, as I leaned at first to the former, so do I now rather incline toward the latter belief, facts not bearing out the former to my satisfaction, although I do not think the question has been, as yet, fully tested by experiment.

It is to be regretted, here, that this question is yearly becoming, in these districts, more difficult of solution; and I am the more strenuous in noting this emigration, because things may come, ere long, to such a pass that it will become wholly undistinguishable.

When first I shot in New Jersey, and in the river counties of New York, the disappearance of the birds was evident enough; because, up to a certain day, they abounded, and after that, were not. Now, long before the second week of July, the woodcock are exterminated in their summer haunts for miles and miles around our large cities; too many of them, alas, slaughtered before the season, when scarcely able to fly, when nearly unfit for the table, when a game despicable to the loyal sportsman, and a victim easy to the pot-hunting knave, who goes *gunning* with a half bred, half broken cur, and a German fowling-piece, dear at a dollar's purchase.

Oh, gentlemen legislators—gentlemen sportsmen,

“Reform it altogether!”

Oh, ye choice spirits, who stood forth, after the long, hard winter and deep snow-drifts—quail-destroying—of 1836, to rescue that delightful little fowl from total extinction, stand forth in likewise now, in protection of the woodcock. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. Railroads are ruining the hopes, the pleasures of the sportsman; our best shooting grounds now swarm, on the first of July, with guns more numerous than birds; the Warwick woodlands, once inaccessible to the pot-hunter and the poacher, may now be reached for fifty cents; may now

be swept clear in a single day—nay, *are* swept clear of half-fledged younglings, by men, boys and bunglers, and ruthlessly devoured before the season has set in, by ignorant, voracious cockneys.

“Reform it altogether!”

Enact that the woodcock shall not be slain, shall not be possessed—as Mr. Blunt possessed him—on plate or in stomach, until the first day of October. Every true sportsman—every sportsman whatsoever—will go hand and heart with the law, will watch and prevent the illegal sale of the bird; and then—ye gods of woodcraft! *Sylvans* and *Fauns*! and thou friend of the hunter, *Pan*!—what sport shall we have in brown October, when the sere underbrush is bare of leaves to mar the sportsman’s aim; when the cool, dewy earth sends up the odor of the game in fresh streams to the setter’s keen and sagacious nose; when the pure air braces the nerves and fans the brow—delicious; when the full-grown, white-fronted, pink-legged cock springs up—not fluttering feebly now and staggering stupidly into the muzzle of the gun, to drop again within twenty yards, but on a vigorous and whistling pinion, with sharp-piping alarm note, swift as a rifle-bullet, soaring away through the tree-tops, or darting, devious with abrupt zig-zags, among the thick-set saplings.

Him no boy can blaze at his twenty times in half an hour, and slaughter after all with one chance pellet, or happily wearied down without one! Him can no German gun achieve, of cast iron, scattering its shot over an area of twenty feet, harmless at twenty yards! Him can no cur-dog flush in gun-shot of pot-hunting poacher.

No! gentle reader, him, whether he lies in the tufted fern and wintergreens, or the dry slope of some warm westering hill-side, among brown second growth of oak and chestnut; whether he wades among the shallow mud-pools, sheltered by fern, dock-leaves, and dark colt’s-foot of some deep maple swamp, it needs the stealthy pace, the slow, cat-like, guarded motion, the instinctive knowledge of the ground, the perfect nose, and absolute docility, which belong only to the thorough dog of the thorough sportsman, to find certainly, and stand staunchly! Him, whether he flap up, seen for one second only among the leafless stems,

and lost the next among the tufted tops of the yet verdant alders; whether he soar away, with his sharp whistle, far, far above the red and yellow tree-tops; whether he pitch, now here, now there, sharply and suddenly, among close saplings, it needs the eye of faith, the finger of instinct, the steady nerves, the deliberate celerity, the marking glance, which characterize the true sportsman, the crack shot—who, as poor Cypress averred truly, is born like the poet, not made like the orator—to cut down at his speed, not wing-tipped or leg-broken, but riddled by the concentrated charge, turned over and over in mid air, arrested mercifully by quick and unerring death, and falling with a heavy *thud*, which tells good things of ten ounces' weight, on the brown leaves of gorgeous autumn.

My words are weak to describe the full charm of this noble pastime—noble when followed, as it should be, in the true *animus* and *ardor* of the chase, but most ignoble when perverted to base culinary, carnal, gluttonous, self-seeking; weak are they when compared with the vivid and heart-thrilling reality. Yet read them, gentle legislators; spurn not the *bill of scolopax*—long though it be, in no wise tedious—spurn not the humble petition of the sportsman. Enact! enact! and save our gentle, well-born woodcock; preserve our harmless occupation from the untimely end which threatens it. And ye, oh generous club, who hold your meetings under the sign and sanction of the noble woodcock, perpend, and ponder. Judge if it be not for the best to adopt my plan for our bird's safeguard: one common day of killing in all our northern country, for all states, all counties, so we shall shun all caviling, and that one day the first day of October. And thou, Colonel D— P—r, famous although thy race of pointers, great although thy renown with the Manton, hear my words and repent; thou who, a member of that same sportsmen's club in Gotham; thou who, although thou didst, alas, know better, didst most feloniously and basely—taking advantage of a flaw in Jersey law—anticipate thy brother sportsmen and shoot woodcock long before the fourth day of July, on our friend Tom Dekay's fine farm, nigh unto Vernon, in good Sussex County. Oh, fie on thee! repent! repent, and be forgiven!

Oh! if there be a clause in the New Jersey statute permitting

every land-owner to slay game, in or out of season, on his own farm,—to wring the neck of the hen quail sitting upon her speckled eggs, to murder the hen woodcock hovering over her helpless young,—if that same clause empower that owner to authorize his friend to do like shameful murder, does it befit the gentle and the generous, the courteous and the chivalrous—for such should the true sportsman be—to avail himself of so miserable a pettifogging subterfuge? Ashamed to hear of it, thou wert, Col. D— P—r; for thou didst blush, confused, and stammer faint apology, when charged with thy misdoings. Why not ashamed to do it, gallant colonel? Or how shall *we* dare to enforce the law, or pray for legislative aid to save our proper birds from others, if one from among ourselves resort to small evasion, descend to dirty depredations?

I trust, indeed, that the day will ere long arrive—if not ere long, then will it never be—when all true sportsmen, and their name, in this land of guns, is legion, will set their faces steadily toward game protection, as steadily against those false brothers of the gun, who, crying out, “protect!” “protect!” yet lose, themselves, no opportunity, when unsuspected or unseen, of slaughtering for the bag, and for the *brag*, at all risks, in all manners, and at all seasons.

There certainly is no more manly, no more salubrious, no more animating sport than the pursuit of game, with the trained dog and the gun. It naturally induces hardihood, and strength of limb, freeness of breath, vigor of constitution; it makes men familiar with those works of God, in the field and forest, which are unknown to the dwellers of pent cities. To the studious and sedentary scholar, it is a salutary change of habits, a better tonic and restorative than any bark or bitters; to the rich citizen, the man of wealth, and luxury, and leisure, it is almost the only thing that shall save him from driveling down into a mere gluttonous sensualist, or yet worse, a mere effeminate man-milliner. It leads us into the wildest and the fairest scenes of nature; it brings us quietly to think and ponder with ourselves; it teaches us the habits and instincts of those inferior animals which we too much incline to undervalue; it causes us to weigh their instincts, to compare them with our own boasted reason;

it discovers to us that the poorest bird, the humblest quadruped, has gifts and attributes greater than we possess, and exquisitely suited to its wants.

Does it not lead us, then, to self-examination in some sort and to humility? to the knowledge of ourselves, of our fellow men, and of the great works of our Maker?

I, for one, think so; and I never hear a greasy-faced, sanctimonious fellow declaim against the cruelty, the wantonness and the unprofitableness of field sports, but I set him down for an arrant fool, or an arrant hypocrite. But I long to assure him that, in the eyes of Heaven—and, God be thanked, even in this world also—some pursuits are held profitable besides that of the almighty dollar; and some amusements innocent besides cheating our neighbors in the street, and calling that business; or slandering them by the fireside, and calling that conversation!

I believe, therefore, that field-sports, not carried to excess, but used in their proper places, and at their proper times, are very innocent, very creditable, and very profitable, and very improving pastime. For my own part, I know that they have ministered incalculably to the improvement of my bodily health; and I am sure, at least, that they have not deteriorated my mental faculties; nor do I conceive how any reasonable man can fail to discover that some inducement is necessary to lead men to take that degree of exercise which is necessary to the maintenance of the *mens sana in corpore sano*; and that there can be no stronger or better inducement than this ancient and masculine amusement, which never was decried until these effete days, rich mainly in hypocrisy and humbug.

Xenophon said, of old, that there was no sport so suitable to the making of soldiers, as this said sport of hunting; and to this day, it is true that the ability—nay, not ability only, but willingness—to endure all extremes of heat and cold, of thirst and hunger, of fatigue and watchfulness, to which the sportsman must inure himself, is that precisely which in the highest degree constitutes the aptitude of the citizen to be the soldier. Nor is this all; for the readiness of hand and quickness of eye, the instinctive rapidity of thought and glance, and the coolness under

surprise, which the sportsman must needs acquire if he would be successful, are qualities more requisite than any to the warrior.

Depending, as America does mainly, if not entirely, for her defence, on the facility of converting her citizens into soldiers, I think that all consistent means should be taken to prevent that of which I fancy there is some danger, at least in the great cities; the growth, I mean, of luxury and effeminate habits among the rising generation.

Destroy game—abolish field sports, and you abolish the most manly of exercises; you leave the lounge in fashionable streets, or the drive in easy chariots as the sole out-of-doors amusement of the wealthy man; and to the poor man you leave none at all, but rioting and what is termed *rowdyism*—if these can be called amusements.

For all these reasons, therefore, I think it highly advisable that the extermination of game in the vicinity of our large cities should be prevented if possible; and that it can only be prevented by the speedy interposition of the states' legislatures, backed by a truer and more single spirit than now exists among those who are proud of the name, even when they possess too few of the attributes of honorable sportsmen, I hold certain.

To these, therefore, I appeal in protection, especially, of the woodcock—which will, most assuredly, before ten years have elapsed, be as utterly exterminated, within fifty miles of New York, and within the like circuit of all other large cities, as are the deer and the heath-hen—nay, the wild turkeys, which once peopled our own hunting-grounds.

In conclusion—I find, on reference to my last article on this subject, that I made allusion to a mode of killing the woodcock commonly practised in the southern states, which is so singular, and so completely at variance with all our ideas of sporting in these regions, that it deserves mention, and will, I doubt not, be interesting to many readers who may never have heard of such a process—which, unheard of, they certainly never would imagine.

This process is termed fire-hunting; it is carried on, of course, at night, and arises from the habits of the bird in that section of the country, which differ wholly from its usages while here.

In Louisiana and Mississippi, where, chiefly, this mode of

sporting prevails, the woodcock lies during the day-time entirely in the dense canebrakes and impenetrable swamps which intersect and divide the cultivated lands and rich plantations, and wherein it would be almost impossible, and altogether weary and unprofitable to attempt to follow him; as he could hardly be killed on the wing in such covert as is there found, while the toil would be incomparably greater than the pleasure of the pursuit.

No sooner is it dark, however, than out the woodcocks come by thousands, from their fastnesses, and pitching down on all sides in the old fields and maize stubbles, apply themselves to nibbling and boring in the soft rich loam for their succulent worm diet.

Hereupon the fire-hunt commences. With gun and game-bag, powder-flask and shot-pouch, and all appliances and means *secundum artem*, the sportsman sallies forth; but no silky-haired, high-strung, sagacious setter—no satin-skinned, rat-tailed, obedient pointer follows his master's heels. In lieu of Don or Sancho, an old, crafty, grizzle-pated, merry negro comes forth, equipped with the brazen vessel of a warming-pan, or the like instrument, set erect on a pole of some ten or twelve feet in length, and filled with lightwood, pine knots, or such like bright-burning combustibles.

Arrived on the feeding-ground, a light is applied; the quick fuel sends out a broad, ruddy glare; and as the bearer slowly circumambulates the field, a circle of intense lustre is shed for ten yards around him, rendering every object more clearly visible than at noon-day. The shooter walks close to the fire bearer, on his right hand, and ever and anon, as the circular glare passes along over the surface of the ground, his eye detects the woodcock, crouching close to the earth, and gazing with its full, fascinated eye upon the strange illumination. The next instant, up it springs, dizzy and confused; and soaring upward toward the light, it is seen for a second, and then is lost in the surrounding darkness; but of that one quick second the sportsman takes advantage, and by a snap-shot cuts him down with a light charge—never killing a bird at above ten paces distant, and often bagging his hundred in a single evening's work.

This mode of cock-shooting arises, as it is evident, *ex necessitate rei*, and may, for a while, be sufficiently exciting. It must, however, lack all that variety which is the great charm of our northern shooting—variety which arises from the working of the emulous, obedient and well-trained dogs, in observing whose exquisite instinct, fine attitudes and beautiful docility, *me judice*, lies half the pleasure of field sports; variety which, together with the lovely scenery, the brisk, breezy air, and the exulting sense of personal independence and personal power, springing from these, and from the glow of cheerful exercise, renders these sports, to active, energetic and enthusiastic minds, the first of pleasures, and almost a necessary relief from the dull monotony of every-day existence.

THE CEDARS, Dec. 22, 1845.

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NOTE.—The eloquent and touching appeal of “Frank Forester” for the preservation of the woodcock, and the abolition of summer shooting, is as pertinent to-day as when first penned, nearly forty years ago. Although a voice of the past, it comes with redoubled force, when contemplating the sad depletion of our game birds in the years which have since flown, by the abomination known as summer shooting.—EDITOR.

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### III.

### THE QUAIL.

*TETRAO Coturnix*, LIN. *Coturnix Virginianus*, LATHAM.  
*Ortyx Virginianus*, SIR WILLIAM JARDINE. The Quail, of the Eastern and Middle, the *Partridge* of the Southern States.

This beautiful little bird affords one of the most remarkable examples of those errors and confusions in the nomenclature of game, to which I alluded, in the first paper of this series, as being so general in this country. It would appear, indeed, at first sight, and I suspect not quite untruly, that we have derived the names of all our game, and many of our common song-birds, from the

rude and unpolished men who, for the most part, first settled the woodlands of the United States, and who, from a desire to cultivate some pleasant memories of home in their new country, gave to such varieties as they found here, having the slightest affinity to the unforgotten animals of Europe, names often incongruous and unfitting. This bird is one of the instances in question; and consequently, we find that it has, in fact, no name at all in the United States—its appellation being made to depend altogether on that of another bird in no wise connected with it—the ruffed grouse, namely, *tetrao umbellus*; which it has pleased the original nomenclators to call variously *partridge* and *pheasant*, to neither of which species does it bear much more resemblance than does an owl to a woodcock, or a game-fowl to a turkey.

Where the ruffed grouse is called a partridge, the bird of which we are now speaking is called a quail—only, I believe, because it is smaller than the other, and because, in England, the quail is the next gallinaceous fowl in size after the partridge. Where the ruffed grouse is called the pheasant, our bird becomes the partridge, from precisely the same analogy in size, and in that only, to European game.

With regard to the ruffed grouse, there can be no question for a moment by what name he should be called; for he is a distinct variety of a well-known genus—several varieties being found in the United States, and yet others in the British possessions and the Oregon territory. He is neither partridge nor pheasant, but a distinct feather legged grouse, and properly called *ruffed* or *tippet grouse*, from the beautiful long neck feathers, which, though pendulous in the unexcited state of the bird, are set up in the form of a magnificent ruff, while the tail is fanned like that of a peacock or turkey, by the amorous male during the breeding season. It is, therefore equally unsportsman-like and unscientific to call the bird pheasant or partridge; and it is moreover as needless as it is a stupid barbarism, since the bird has an excellent good name of its own, by which it should invariably be styled, whether in writing or in conversation, by every one claiming to share the spirit of the gentle sport.

As concerns our little friend, whom I judge it best to designate as *quail*—for reasons which I will briefly give hereafter—

this is not altogether the case; for, singular as it may appear, he is so unfortunate as to possess no legitimate or scientific English name whatever. Formerly, he was classed by naturalists as a variety of the quail—*Tetrao Coturnix* of Linnæus—and as such was denominated *Coturnix Virginianus*, Virginia quail, owing to the fact, doubtless, that in Virginia he was found most abundantly, perhaps *only*, on the first landing of English settlers in America.

It has been, however, more recently determined, and I presume correctly, that this bird is not a variety of quail, but a distinct species, peculiar to the New World, and situate about midway between the tribes of partridges and quails; and the investigators of these differences, which consist in the greater hardness and peculiar shape of the bill of the American bird and in some dissimilarity in the shape of the wing, have agreed to designate the new variety, scientifically, as *Ortyx Virginianus*, but have assigned to him no name whatever in the vernacular.

I may here be permitted to observe, that the new term, *ortyx*, as a designation of a new genus, or sub-genus, is absurdly ill-chosen; since the old name, *Coturnix Virginianus*, signifies Virginian quail, in *Latin*, while *Ortyx Virginianus* signifies precisely the same thing in *Latinized Greek*.

Now, it is partly for this reason that I would retain the old English name of *quail*, in preference to that of *partridge*, for this American species; since I consider the choice of the title, by the distinguished naturalists who have adopted the designation *ortyx*, to indicate that the bird is, in their opinion, more nearly allied to the quail than to the partridge.

Again, the size, weight, haunts and habits of the American bird, all very nearly resemble those of the European quail; while they are exceedingly unlike those of European partridges, of which there are two varieties—the gray, or English, and the red-legged, or French species.

The American bird is, perhaps, an ounce heavier than the European quail, while it is full one-half lighter than either of the partridges. The American bird, like the European quail, frequents bushy ground, and the skirts of woodland, and often takes to the tree, and perches. The European partridges are very

rarely found in the shrubbery or coppice, and are never known to perch. The American bird, like the European quail, is migratory. The European partridge never removes, unless in consequence of unrelenting pursuit, far from the fields on which he is bred; and lastly, the cry, the flight and the plumage of the American bird, very closely resemble those of his compeer, the quail of Europe.

Hence I consider *Quail* to be his correct name, in common parlance; I should wish to see *American Quail* adopted as his title in works on ornithology; and I sincerely trust that I shall live to see one general name, and that name *quail*, adopted by all sportsmen in the United States, thereby avoiding the palpable absurdity of shooting, I will suppose, twenty of these birds, and two or three ruffed grouse, in the morning, in New Jersey—the former being quails and the latter partridges; and, in the afternoon, walking across a bridge over the Delaware, and shooting more birds of each kind in Pennsylvania, which shall there and then have become partridges and *pheasants*. Heaven save the mark! When it is as clear as day that there is not a single variety of partridge or pheasant to be found on the whole continent of America, North and South.

The pheasant is an Asiatic bird, like the peacock; originally found on the southern shores of the Black Sea, and thence imported into Europe, where it has thriven wonderfully; so that in Germany and France, and yet more so in England, it has become indiginous and abundant. Many attempts have been made to naturalize it in this country, but entirely without success; owing, I fancy, to the want of moisture in the climate, and to the summer droughts, rather than to the severity of the winter season.

Having premised thus much concerning his name, I will describe our bird briefly, and then proceed to his habits and haunts, which are both curious and interesting; and indicative of a higher degree of instinct than is usual to birds of this tribe, and seemingly more nearly allied to reason.

The quail is about nine inches in length, from the tip of his bill to the extremity of the toes, by twelve in width, from wing to wing, when extended. Though apparently much smaller than

the woodcock, he is not much lighter, for not only are his feathers closer and more compact, but he is rounder and plumper in proportion to his length; and when well-grown and full-fed, weighs from seven to nine ounces, although he rarely attains the maximum.

His bill is strong and horny, the upper mandible considerably arched; and the whole instrument constituting an apparatus calculated to break the shells of the hardest seeds, as well as a weapon capable of inflicting severe wounds on his rivals; for he is scarcely less pugnacious than the game-cock; and is still kept for the same purpose by the Chinese and Malays, as he was of old by the polished democrats of Athens.

His eye is large, black and very lively. The back of his head, neck, shoulders, wing-coverts, and rump, are all beautifully mottled with brown, black and chestnut, each feather having a yellowish margin, and a dark, irregular line, diverging from the point towards the stem. The quills and tail are of a rich, reddish brown, broadly barred with black.

In the cock-bird, the cheeks and chin are snow-white, with the exception of a dark streak, running upward from the angle of the eyes. In the hen they are a bright ochreous yellow. The breast, in both, is white, speckled with wavy lines of black, something like arrow-heads in shape, pointing downward toward the tail; the legs are protected by strong scales, of an olive brown, and the male bird has rather a formidable spur.

Otherwise there is no distinction between the sexes, which are similar in eye and shape; except, perhaps, that the colors of the hen are somewhat less vivid and distinct than those of the male, as is generally the case in the animal creation.

It will be seen at once from this description, that our American quail is a most beautiful little bird; but his beauties do not consist merely in his plumage, but in his gait, his pretty, pert movements, his great vivacity, his joyful attitudes, his constant and cheerful activity.

He is in all respects the most social, the merriest, the most amiable of his tribe. During the breeding season he alone, of the gallinaceous tribe, makes wood and mead resound with his shrill, merry whistle—whence our country folk have framed to

him a name, *Bob White*, from some fancied similarity of sound—cheering his faithful partner during the toils of incubation.

Afterward, when the bevies are collected, as he runs from the huddle in which he has passed the night, he salutes his brethren, perhaps thanks his Creator for the pleasant dawn, with the most cheerful noise that can be fancied, a short, quick, happy chirping, "and seems to be," to borrow the words of the inimitable Audubon,—I quote from memory alone,—"the happiest little creature in the universe."

Unlike the young broods of the woodcock—which are mute, save the twitter with which they rise—the bevies of quail appear to be attached to each other by tender affection. If dispersed by accidental causes, either in search of their food, or from being flushed by some casual intruder, so soon as their first alarm has passed over, they begin calling to each other with a small plaintive note, quite different from the amorous whistle of the male bird, and from their merry day-break cheeping, and each one running toward the sound and repeating it at intervals, they soon collect themselves together in one happy little family, the circle of which remains unbroken until the next spring, with the genial weather, brings matrimonial ardors, pairing and courtship, in the hope of future bevies.

If, however, the ruthless sportsman has been among them, with his well-trained setter and unerring gun, so that death has sorely thinned their numbers, they will protract their little call for their lost comrades, even to nightfall; and, in such cases—I know not if it be fancy on my part—there has often seemed to me to be an unusual degree of melancholy in their wailing whistle.

Once this struck me especially. I had found a small bevy of thirteen birds in an orchard, close to a house in which I was passing a portion of the summer, and in a very few minutes killed twelve of them, for they lay hard in the clover, and it was perfectly open shooting. The thirteenth and last bird, rising with two others, which I killed right and left, flew but a short distance and dropped among some sumachs in the corner of a rail fence. I could have shot him certainly enough, but some undefined feeling induced me to call my dogs to heel and spare his little

life; yet, afterwards, I almost regretted what I certainly intended at the time to be mercy; for day after day, so long as I remained in the country, I heard his sad call from morn till dewy eve, crying for his departed friends, and full, apparently of memory, which is, alas, but too often another name for sorrow.

The quail is not only the most sociable of his tribe in reference to his fellows, but is by far the most tameable and friendly in his disposition as regards the general enemy and universal tyrant—man.

In the winter season, when the ground is so deeply covered with snow as to render it impossible for them to obtain their customary food—the seeds, namely, of the various grasses which they love the most, or the grains which lie scattered in the stubbles, they come naturally into the vicinity of man's dwelling, and it is by no means an unusual sight to perceive them running about among the domestic fowls in the barn-yard, and flying up, if suddenly disturbed, to perch under the rafters of some barn or out-house, seemingly fearless and confident in such seasons of protection.

At this moment, I have a bevy of thirteen birds lying within three or four hundred yards of the room in which I sit writing, under the shelter of a rough wooded bank whereon I have been feeding them with buckwheat since the heavy snows have fallen, and they have now become so tame that they will allow me to approach within twenty paces of the spot where they are fed, running about and picking up the triangular seeds, perfectly unconcerned in my presence. As soon, however, as the spring shall have commenced, and the bevy separated themselves into pairs, their wild habits will return upon them, and I shall see no more of my little friends until I meet them next autumn in the brown stubble-field,—no longer in the light of a protector.

The quail pairs early in the month of February, if the winter has been a mild one and the ground at that period is free from its snowy winter covering. If, on the contrary, the spring be late and backward, his courtship is deferred until March—sometimes even so late as to the beginning of April.

As soon as he has chosen to himself a mate, the happy pair retreat to wide, open, rushy meadows, where the conformation of

the country affords them such retirement, among the tussocks of which they love to bask in the soft spring sunshine. Where the land is higher, and is broken into knolls and gulleys, you will find them at this season on the grassy banks beside some sheltered hedgerow, or along the green and shrubby margin of some sequestered retreat, but never in thick woodlands, and rarely in open fields.

Most birds, so soon as they have paired, proceed at once to the duties of nidification and the rearing of their young; it seems to me, however, that the quail spends some time in pairs before proceeding to this task; for I have frequently seen them paired so early as the twentieth of February; yet I have never found the hen sitting, or a nest with eggs in it, during spring snipe-shooting, though I have often flushed the paired birds on the same ground with the long-billed emigrants.

I have never, indeed, seen a quail's nest earlier than the middle of May, and have often found them sitting so late as the end of July.

Their nest is inartificial, made of grasses, and situate, for the most part, under the shelter of a stump or tussock in some wild meadow, or near the bushy margin of some clover-field or orchard. The hen lays from ten to two-and-twenty eggs, and is relieved at times, in hatching them, by the male bird, who constantly keeps guard around her, now sitting on the bough of the nearest tree, now perched on the top rail of a snake fence, making the woods and hills resound with his loud and cheery whistle.

The period of the quail's incubation I do not know correctly; the young birds run the moment they burst from the egg, and it is not uncommon to see them tripping about with pieces of the shell adhering to their backs.

The first brood hatched and fairly on foot, the hen proceeds at once to the preparation of a second nest; and committing the care of the early younglings to her mate, or rather dividing with him the duties of rearing the first and hatching the second brood, she devotes herself incessantly to her maternal duties.

So far as I can ascertain, the quail almost invariably raises a second, and sometimes, I believe, a third brood, in a single season. Hence, if unmolested, they increase with extraordinary rapidity

when the seasons are propitious; and hence you frequently find young birds, in two or three stages of maturity, in a single bevy, and under the protection of a single brace of parents.

The quail cannot endure severe cold weather, hence he is never found far to the eastward of Boston; I have never heard of his being found at all in the states of Maine and New Hampshire and can assert of my own knowledge that, in the former state, he does not exist, if elsewhere, east of the river Kennebeck. In Lower Canada he is unknown; and it is only within a few years that he has become abundant, and a continual resident in the upper provinces, along the northern shores of the Niagara and of Lake Erie.

I cannot, however, satisfy myself entirely that this is the effect of climate, as it may be the consequence of cultivation, on the skirts of which only is the quail found—with one exception, the great prairies of the west, which—whether natural meadows, or, as some persons believe, the remnants of aboriginal civilization—present to the quail all the comforts which he desires from cultivation and the vicinity of man's dwellings—grass-seeds, I mean, and open sunshine.

In the forest the quail is never found, unless when that forest is girded about with settlements, and interspersed with partial clearness and buckwheat or corn fields, when he will ramble away during the heat of summer noon-tide into the cool, green retreats of mountain woodlands.

I have never seen, nor have I heard of a nest placed in a wood; and, were it not for the prairies, which I suppose to have been their haunt and feeding ground for ages, I should be at a loss to conceive where either the quail or the woodcock existed, when all the sea-board of America, and for leagues upon leagues inward, the whole face of the country was covered with primeval wilderness, since neither of the birds, as I have before stated, are ever found in the wild forest, and both make their appearance almost immediately when sunshine is let into those deep solitudes by the settler's axe, and the brown stubble has succeeded to the leaf-carpet of the dim and steamy wilderness.

But a few years ago, the woodcock was found in Maine, only in the vicinity of Portland and the oldest settlements; he is now

killed abundantly in the intervals, as they are called in that region, on the Kennebeck, and is extending himself slowly but surely eastward, as the forest recedes before the lumberman. He is, however, a rare bird on the waters of the Penobscot, though there are ranges of swampy coverts, miles and miles in length, of that very soil and nature which he loves the best; and though I have never seen lying or feeding grounds in New Jersey superior to the oak-islands, above Indian Oldtown, upon the beautiful river I have mentioned.

Five years have passed, however, since I shot in those regions, and found it hard work to bag a couple or two of cock on ground which here would have yielded forty or fifty birds; and I should not be surprised to learn that, in the interim, they have become plenty in those very woods. That it is not climate which influences the woodcock, is evident from the fact that they have abounded for many years in the vicinity of Windsor and Annapolis, in New Brunswick, where the climate is much colder; but the reign of cultivation more widely extended, because far older, than in the eastern parts of Maine.

It may then, in some measure, be attributed to the same cause, namely, the prevalence of unbroken wilderness, and the absence of large grain fields, that the quail is not found in our eastern-most states; and if it be true, as Latham states, that the quail is found in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, this might be assumed, and not climate, as the established cause of his aversion to the northeastern country.

But I believe it is not true; for, of many good and staunch sportsmen, with whom I am acquainted in St. John, and elsewhere in the British Provinces, I have found none who have shot this bird therein.

I have said above, that the quail, in propitious seasons, increases with extraordinary rapidity; I will now add, that in unfavorable years, he often comes to the very verge of extinction. Long, severe snows, when the country is buried many feet deep, and he can procure no sustenance, save from the precarious charity of man, famishes him outright—heavy drifts, especially when succeeded by a partial thaw, and a frost following the thaw, stifle him in whole bevies, encased in icy prison-houses.

It is the peculiar habit of this bird to lie still, squatted in concentric huddles, as they are technically called, composed of the whole bevy, seated like the radii of a circle, with their tails inward, so long as snow, sleet or rain continues to fall. So soon as it clears off, and the sun shines out, with a simultaneous effort, probably at a preconcerted signal, they all spring up at once, with an impetus and rush so powerful as carries them clear through a snow-drift many feet in depth; unless it be skimmed over by a frozen crust, which is not to be penetrated by their utmost efforts. In this latter case, when the storm has been general over a large extent of country, the quails are not unfrequently reduced so nearly to extinction, that but a bevy or two will be seen for years on ground where previously they had been found in abundance; and at such time, if they be not spared and cherished, as they will be by all true sportsmen, they may be destroyed entirely throughout a whole region.

This was the case especially through all this section of the country, in the tremendous winter of 1835-6, when these birds, which had been previously very abundant, were almost annihilated, and would have been so, doubtless, but for the anxiety which was felt generally, and the energetic means which were taken to preserve them.

Another peril, which, at times, decimates the breed for a season, is a sudden and violent land-flood, in June and July, which drowns the young birds, or a continuance of cold, showery weather in those and the preceding months, which addles the eggs and destroys the early bevy. This is, however, but a partial evil, as the quail rears a second brood, and, as I have before observed, sometimes a third; so that in this case the number of birds for the season is diminished without the tribe being endangered.

The open winters which have prevailed latterly have been exceedingly favorable to the increase of this beautiful and prolific little bird. Never, perhaps, have they been more abundant than they were last autumn; and though there has been more than an average of snow thus far during the present winter, it has not been heavily drifted for the most part; it has not laid on the

ground many consecutive days, and it has not, hitherto, been crusted once.

The sun is now beginning to gain considerable power; the season is rapidly advancing toward spring, and, with a little care in feeding and preserving the birds from poachers and trappers, we have every prospect of yet a larger supply next autumn.

In my next paper—for I feel that I am running somewhat out of bounds—I shall point out where, in my opinion, the present laws for their protection are inoperative and inadequate, and how they may be simplified and amended: I shall touch upon that much-disputed point—their domestic and internal migrations, in relation to which I have collected some curious facts, which are not, I believe, generally known, and which may prove interesting; and, lastly, I shall dwell at length on the best method of quail-shooting, with the results of some days' sport, from Connecticut so far southward as Maryland, which is the southernmost limit of my sporting experience in the United States.

THE CEDARS, January, 1846.

#### I V.

### THE QUAIL.

THE migratory habit of the American quail has always been in some degree a disputed point, among both naturalists and sportsmen, and I know many of the latter who deny it altogether.

Notwithstanding this, I am myself thoroughly convinced of the fact that the bird is, to a certain degree, migratory during some weeks of the autumn; and I think I can establish this fact from my own personal observation, as well as from the statements of others worthy of high credit. The reason of the doubt on this subject arises from two causes; first, that the migration of this bird is short, irregular, continuous and, apparently, causeless; and, secondly, that it is not nearly so distinctly marked in this

district of the country as it is in the western states, where the bird is infinitely more abundant than in these regions.

When I state that the migration is irregular and *continuous*, I mean to say that the bird, at no season, *entirely* leaves any section of the country; but that there is a constant movement of successive bevies in the same direction, which is invariably eastward; and I am perfectly satisfied that this is more or less the case everywhere, and that it is more conspicuously so the further west we travel.

Audubon, than whom no better authority exists, for he writes from personal observation, states that on the banks of the western rivers, he mentions, I think, particularly the confluences of the Ohio, these beautiful little birds may be seen regularly in the autumn, running eastward in great flocks, not single bevies, and crossing the large streams on the wing, always in the same direction. During a discussion which took place in the pages of the New York "Turf Register," originating between that excellent writer and most estimable man, Wm. P. Hawes, and an anonymous author using the signature "H." of Marietta, and subsequently enlisting, on one side or the other, half the sporting writers of the country, some new and striking authorities were elicited on this fact; these I shall here present to my reader, and, in corroboration of these, apply some recent observations of my own, which cannot, I think, but prove conclusive.

The first of these authorities is a very distinguished writer on turf affairs, under the signature of "Alpha," whose testimony is the more valuable on this point, that he is in some measure an unwilling witness.

Quoting from an article of mine, he says: "'The quail is known to be a bird of passage.' Ours is not so *generally* known to be; at least *I* doubt it very much. They seem to me, in the fall, to be taken with a sort of crazy rambling fit, which lasts for so short a time as not to allow of a very distant emigration. Some people say they always fly east."

The writer then proceeds to speak of the large flocks in which the quail is said to travel in the autumn, declaring that he has heard of the fact, but never seen or believed it.

The testimony of Alpha, therefore, proves all that is asserted,

namely, that there *is* a general migratory movement, which he graphically describes as "*crazy and rambling*," in the early autumn, and that it is thought to be eastward. This paragraph brought out another witness, the celebrated "N." of Arkansas, than whom there exists no person better qualified to speak to any fact concerning field-sports in America.

He testifies distinctly, that he *has seen*, with his own eyes, vast congregated flocks of quail; and knows, of his own knowledge, that in his own state, and throughout the western states, there is an annual eastward autumnal migration.

So clear and positive is he on this subject, that the writer from whom I quoted first, admitted in a subsequent paper: "'Alpha' must give up to 'N.' of Arkansas. I know 'N.' of old, and although he is no very great sportsman in the *little* bird line, he knows what he sees; and like the young Persian, 'when a boy he learned to shoot, ride a horse, and speak the truth.'"

The admissions of these western writers, who have every opportunity, which we lack, of observing the manners and disposition of this bird, when combined with the paramount authority of Mr. Audubon, settle the question, as it appears to me, so far, at least, as the western country is concerned.

Now, as it might be replied to this that the quail is migratory in the west, but stationary here, I will adduce two circumstances which have fallen under my own immediate observation, and which I think indisputably show that the migratory character of the bird is unchanged in this region of the country.

It will be remembered by all sportsmen that the winter of 1835-36 was one of extreme and unusual severity; that the ground was covered with snow to the depth of several feet, from the early part of January until the middle of April; and that much apprehension was entertained that the quail would be entirely destroyed throughout this section of country. Precautions were taken very generally to guard against this misfortune; live quail were sought during the winter by many gentlemen, and carefully preserved until the spring; and some were even imported from South Carolina.

Among others engaged in this work of solucrine love, I bought myself, and kept in New York, a hundred brace of these birds;

and on the tenth of April turned them out in the vale of Warwick, my favorite shooting ground at that time, on the farms of two different friends, by whom I was very confident they would be preserved.

It so happened that I spent the greater part of that summer, from the middle of June until the end of August, in the immediate neighborhood of the place where the birds were turned out, and feeling a good deal of interest in the matter, watched them regularly during the whole breeding season.

The consequence was, that I knew the existence and locality of above twenty nests, no one of which contained less than a dozen eggs, all of which were hatched safely, and got off early, by the old birds. There must have been, of course, many other nests which were not discovered at all; and many of those birds whose first broods I saw, must unquestionably have raised second bevies.

Naturally enough, I was delighted with the result of my experiment, and augured great things concerning the autumn shooting of that year. I was on the ground at daylight on the first day of the season, with a party of friends, whom I had seduced into accompanying me by the promise of admirable sport; we had undeniable dogs with us, in considerable numbers; we spent ten days in thoroughly rummaging the country; and, without vanity, I believe I may say that we knew sufficiently well what we were about, not to leave many birds behind us.

The result was that we had no sport whatever—two or three bevies were all that we found over a wide tract of country; and from that day to this, the race of quail has run so nearly extinct in that region, that it is not worth looking for them.

The explanation of this fact is, I think, easy enough. The native breed of quail were, as we had expected, nearly exterminated; those which were turned out, emigrated to a bird.

It is proper that I should add, that the Warwick shooting grounds were at that time shot over by no sportsman but myself; and that the people of the place hardly knew what it was to shoot flying. Birds of prey were scarce, and could hardly, however plentiful, have destroyed *the whole broods* of a hundred brace of old birds.

The second anecdote which I have to relate, is yet more conclusive.

The summer and autumn of 1844, I passed at the pleasant village of Bristol, on the western bank of the Delaware; and, with my friend Mr. B—, an excellent and thorough sportsman, had a good deal of shooting at quail, woodcock and grass-plover in their seasons. Having little else to do, I was out shooting certainly three times a week, and for some days previous to the commencement of the quail season, had beaten all the country for several miles up and down the river and westward, for woodcock.

In doing this, I became satisfied that there were no quail, to speak of, in the vicinity; not, at the utmost, above two or three bevies; and our sport, after the close time expired, corroborated my opinion in this respect.

Shortly afterward, when the cold weather set in, not an evening passed, but bevy after bevy came, about dusk, into the gardens and orchards of the village, and into all the surrounding coppices, and might be heard calling in every direction until nightfall.

Morning after morning, as soon as it was light enough to shoot, I was a-foot, expecting to get sport; but not in a single instance did I find any birds, though I subsequently learned that a few, who knew their habits in that district, crossing the Delaware to the Jersey shore, had good shooting on these very birds, which, it seems, invariably crossed the river, there scarcely a mile in width, as soon as the morning twilight was growing gray.

This migration is perfectly well known to all the sportsmen in that district; it takes place regularly every autumn; commencing with the first sharp frost, and continuing from three to six weeks; it is invariably from the west eastward; and the countrymen will tell you that the birds are making their way to the Pines, on the Jersey shore, which I do not believe. Lastly, I could not learn that any counter-migration, from the east westward, has ever been observed, though several intelligent persons, whom I questioned, informed me that they had looked for such a thing annually, but in vain.

The birds, I should add, are constantly seen flying across the

river by early laborers and fishermen; and occasionally, if the wind should be adverse, the weaklings of the bevy fall into the broad stream and perish.

These facts, in my opinion, thoroughly establish the fact that the quail *does* migrate, though of all migrations it appears to be the most strange and mysterious.

Contrary to all expectation, at the commencement of the cold season the quail *runs*—for unless in crossing large streams, or sheets of water, I am satisfied that the journey is made on foot—from the warmer west to the colder east.

Food can have nothing to do with the change of locality, since that abounds most where the climate is mildest.

Appropriateness of breeding-ground is not involved in the movement, for it takes place at the very opposite season of the year.

Lastly, it cannot be ascertained whither the passengers go, or where their wanderings terminate.

The consequence of this annual eastern migration ought to be, at least, a temporary accumulation of bevies in vast numbers to the eastward; since, as I have stated in my last paper, there is an eastern limit, and that not very distant, to the existence of the bird at all.

No such accumulation is known, however, or rather no such accumulation exists.

It is almost certain, therefore, that after what "Alpha" calls its "crazy rambling fit," the quail again returns westward, though to say the least, it is strange in the extreme, that constantly seen, as it is in all parts of the country, on its eastern movement, it has never been heard or seen when working its way backward.

Of one thing only we are certain, that no instinct of the humblest of God's creatures but has its meaning and its use, and I know nothing which should lead us so much to doubt our own boasted intellect and superiority, as the conviction which must force itself upon us the more strenuously as we examine the more deeply, how little we can comprehend of the wonderful nature and wisely constituted habits of what we term the inferior animals.

Every year, it is true, brings something to our little stock of

knowledge, and if sportsmen, and gentlemen residing in the country generally, would note down the time and incidents which they observe with regard to natural history, whether of birds, beasts, fishes or flowers, and would occasionally give these to the public, it is incredible how much information might be collected, and in how short a time.

I will take, therefore, this opportunity of requesting gentlemen, who take any interest in field-sports, to communicate to me any observations they may make, however seemingly unimportant—for from masses of trifles are combined great truths—concerning the habits, and more especially the *migrations* of all sorts of game, either directed to my own residence or to the offices of the "Democratic Review" or the New York "Spirit of the Times." Precision of dates is of the greatest importance; and I doubt not from simultaneous observations in many parts of the country, of the first and last appearance of various birds, as the woodcock and English snipe, of the earliest and latest pairing, nesting and hatching, as of quail, etc., that much might be gained of really valuable knowledge concerning very interesting, and, comparatively speaking, unknown portions of natural history.

I will now proceed to the existing laws for the preservation of this beautiful little bird; to the alterations which I would desire to see effected in them, and without which I despair of ever seeing game adequately or properly protected.

The object of the game laws of this country, different entirely from those of Europe, which reserve the right of killing game to privileged classes, is intended merely to protect the animals from annihilation, by guarding them during the periods of nidification, incubation and the immaturity of the broods—and their operation is consequently limited to prohibiting the killing of game during certain seasons of the year.

The great difficulty which has hitherto resisted the efforts of all those who see the utility of protecting game, has been found in the impossibility of getting farmers to enforce these laws. Misapprehending their object, and overlooking their own interests in the matter, they have never as yet been willing to prosecute the offenders, or to prohibit *their own neighbors* from killing, in

season and out of season, although they have, perhaps, at times enforced the law against strangers.

The reason of this seeming perversity lies, I believe, mainly in the inadequacy and absurdity of the laws themselves; which, having been framed without any proper understanding of the subject, naturally appear to the land-owner useless, vexatious and made for the pleasure of the men of cities, as opposed to that of the countryman and farmer.

I have shown, in my articles on the woodcock, that the law does not protect that bird sufficiently long, for the broods are not half-grown in July, and that the woodcock is consequently on the verge of absolute extermination. I have shown that July shooting is obnoxious to the farmer, because it leads to the damage and destruction of his standing crops; and I will now add that it is unfair toward him in its operation, because the summer is his busy season, and before the autumn, when he has leisure to enjoy field-sport, the woodcock are all destroyed by loafers and pot-hunters.

I have proposed, therefore, that the close time during which woodcock may *not* be killed, taken or sold, shall be extended from the first day of February until the first day of October.

This alteration will save the immature bird from slaughter by mere cockneys; will act as a guard to the crops of the farmer; and, lastly, will give a fair opportunity of enjoying field-sports to him who has the best right to enjoy them, the owner and occupant of the land whereon the game is bred and reared.

I now come to the quail; and, for reasons which I shall presently give, as well as to produce simplification and uniformity, qualities which always tend vastly to the practicability and enforcement of the law, I would propose that the close time for this bird shall be the same as that for the woodcock—from the first of February, namely, until the first day of October.

The laws at present prohibit the killing of quail in the state of New York, except between the twenty-fifth day of October and the first day of January; in the state of New Jersey, except between the first day of November and the first day of January;

and in the state of Pennsylvania, except between the first day of September and the fifteenth day of January.

Now the first day of November and the twenty-fifth day of October are *both* needlessly *late* in the season; and the first of January is needlessly *early* in the season for the termination and commencement of close time.

The great majority of the bevies of quail are quite full grown on the first of October; except in very backward seasons, and except in the case of a few very late *third* bevies.

Let it be observed that I do not say that all the bevies are full grown; but that they are so in the proportion of three bevies out of four, will not, I think, be disputed.

Now the object of the law is chiefly to prevent the depredation of pot-hunters, poachers, idle boys and village or city loafers, who will kill game at all times when they can sell it. The good sportsman, if he falls upon a bevy of half-grown birds, calls off his dog at once; because such *cheepers*, as they are technically named, afford him no sport in the field and are not fit to serve up on the table.

The very class, moreover, from whom all danger accrues to the half-grown bird, I mean the prowling market-shooter, compulsorily spares the half-grown quail, because the victualler will not buy it.

The victualler *will* buy the half-grown woodcock, because at the period when the law allows them to be killed and sold, he can get none other, eight-tenths of all July birds being half-grown younglings of that summer; the quail, however, he *will not* buy half-grown at all, because he has always the option of purchasing full-grown birds at the same period of the year.

Hence I argue that the quail runs no danger whatever from anticipating the present shooting season by one month; since the sportsman will not kill the young bevies, from true sportsmanship, and the poacher will spare them because they are of no use to him when killed; and because to shoot them is, therefore a mere waste of powder and shot.

It will, on the contrary, be a farther protection to them; since the farmer, as the law now stands, clearly perceives the absurdity of prohibiting the killing of perfectly mature birds at the very

season which is the most agreeable for out-of-doors exercise and the most suitable for sporting.

Still worse is the prohibition to kill quail during the month of January—a prohibition grounded on a total ignorance of the habits of the bird.

It *never* pairs, under any circumstances, earlier than the beginning of February, and in backward years not earlier than March, and even April.

It was only yesterday that I counted fifteen birds in bevy within fifty yards of my door.

I will now cite a fact to show the evil operation of such capricious and useless legislation.

My notice was called, a fortnight since, to a protest, by some highly respectable farmers in the vicinity of Newburg, exclaiming against all game laws as oppressive, vexatious and made so as “to restrict not only the *liberties*, but the *legal rights* of one class of society, for the exclusive *pleasure*, and not for the benefit of another”—and giving notice that they will kill game on their own premises at all such times as their convenience, pleasure or interest may dictate.

This protest contains this remarkable passage: “But why prohibit the killing of game after the first of January? Clearly because the weather is then too uncomfortable for the loafers to leave their grog-shops, and because that is the only season *when the farmer has leisure and can take such recreation.*”

Now, these gentlemen are in error, it is true; but only as to the intention, not as to the operation of the law. The prohibition to kill game after the first of January is useless, vexatious, absurd and oppressive to the farmer; though certainly it was not intended to be so by those who framed it.

The only chance there is of having game laws enforced is not only in seeing that they be just, but that they seem just.

They are now unjust, and appear to be more unjust than they are.

Put them in their right form, and no such question as the above will be asked; or, if asked, it can be answered at once by a statement of the actual fact, that the close time is intended to protect birds during the breeding season, and during that only.

Therefore, I say, open the season for killing and selling quail, woodcock, ruffed grouse (*vulg.* partridge) and rabbit from the first of October to the first or, if thought better, even until the fifteenth of February. We shall then protect each of these animals during the whole time in which they need protection, and no longer; we shall avoid the appearance as well as the reality, of partiality and injustice; we shall ultimately enlist the farmer as a law-preserved, instead of a law-breaker; and in the end, we may hope to have fine autumnal shooting throughout the land, instead of seeing all the species of game utterly exterminated.

I have two more observations to make under this head, with which I shall close this somewhat, I fear, over-long paper.

The first is addressed to those gentlemen who procured the passage and were engaged in the framing of the law as it now stands. Their object was, doubtless, to extend the utmost possible preservation to the quail, fearing the extinction, during the deep snows of winter, by trapping and the gun.

Now, the fact is that the quail is in far less danger of extinction than the woodcock.

Farmers, seeing the quail bred and wintered on their land, accustomed to see them daily feeding on their stubbles, and during severe storms taking shelter in their barn-yards, regard them in some sort as poultry; do to a certain degree protect them; and frequently forbid the pursuit of them, while they offer no objection to the hunting of the migratory and swamp-haunting woodcock.

The woodcock, moreover, is much more easily killed, particularly during the absurd and barbarous summer shooting; and lastly, it is a matter of fact that, while for fifty miles round all our large cities, and even our considerable villages, the woodcock has become almost extinct within the last ten years, the quantity of quail has very slightly declined, if at all, during the same period.

Deep snows and severe weather may thin them for a time, but one or two prosperous seasons bring them about again, and the stock is as numerous as ever.

With regard to the woodcock, on the contrary, I know fifty

swamps myself, wherein, ten years ago, it was an easy thing to kill twenty birds in the morning, in which there has not been a solitary cock seen for the last six or seven seasons.

There is no fear, therefore, of injuring the quail by extending the open season for shooting, while certain annihilation must fall on the woodcock if summer shooting be not instantly abolished.

My second appeal is to the farmer, to whom I desire to point out that it is vastly for *his interest* to enforce the game laws, even if he care nothing about shooting himself.

The fondness of field-sports has increased much of late, and the quantity of game diminished so greatly, that if in any section of the country, where game of any kind abounds, two or three owners of adjoining farms would combine to preserve their game strictly, allowing no person to shoot it at any season, and rigorously prosecuting for every trespass and every breach of the game laws, they could readily let the exclusive privilege of shooting, over every thousand acres so preserved, for two or three hundred dollars a season, or, perhaps, even a larger sum.

Advertisements in the "Spirit of the Times" or other papers of large circulation, offering the right of sporting upon such tracts of land so preserved, would be readily taken up by companies of two or three gentlemen, supposing that due reliance could be placed on the strict protection of the game against all interlopers.

There is no doubt, therefore, that in good game countries every farmer owning two hundred acres of land can, by combining with his neighbors to enforce the game laws, realize his fifty dollars, and from that to a hundred a year, without the expense of a dollar or half an hour's trouble.

I know myself at least fifty gentlemen who would gladly combine in parties of three, four and upwards, to hire the privilege of exclusive shooting on good tracts of sporting ground. I would myself willingly enter into such combinations; and should any farmers think this suggestion worthy of notice, would gladly assist them in negotiating such arrangements.

I have no hesitation in saying that for certain tracts of land, such as portions of the drowned lands in Orange county, New

York, the Big Piece on the Passaic river, the Long Meadow, the Little Piece, in the same vicinity, the Chatham meadows, in New Jersey, the quail grounds near Sparta, in the same state, and the like, if resolutely preserved by the joint owners, many thousand dollars annually could be realized merely for the exclusive right of shooting over them.

THE CEDARS, February, 1846.

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NOTE.—The excellent series of sketches, of which the foregoing form a part, closes with a very entertaining and instructive article upon "Quail Shooting," but as the paper has been given almost *verbatim* in "Frank Forester's Field Sports," it may be safely considered that it is familiar to the reader.

—EDITOR.

## *AMONG THE MOUNTAINS;*

OR,

## *TAKING TIMES ALONG A TROUT-STREAM.*

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IT is some two years since, that I was sitting alone, in the early gloaming of a beautiful May evening, toward the close of that sweet but variable month, in the projecting oriel windows of my little cottage-hall, which overlooks a beautiful reach of the smooth, silvery Passaic, and the upward slopes of the farther side covered with rich orchards, in the last flush of their delicate bloom, and groves of ornamental forest trees and shrubbery, from which peep out, not unfrequent, the roofs of ornamented cottages or unambitious farm-houses—a calm and pleasant picture of easy and contented moral culture. The day had been soft and balmy, with a mild western breeze playing among the tender, light green sprays of the beeches and the young chestnut leaves, the hyacinths and jonquils were gay and fragrant in the garden-beds, the lilac hedges perfumed all the air around, and a faint scent was stealing from the woodbines on the porch and the cluster-roses around the rustic verandas. The blue-birds, saucy and familiar, had been busy all day long, twittering and chirruping, as they flew to and fro with morsels of wool and moss or feathers, to their nesting boxes; from the shrubberies had come constant the melodious warble of that much maligned of songsters, the traduced cat-bird, while from the neighboring wood-skirts had come up, clear, ringing and mellow, the emulous carols of the brown and the hermit thrushes.

But now, as the day waned and the fire in the west faded out, all was changed,—sounds and sights, and the sentiments created by them. A soft mist floated up from the stream, half suiting the landscape, glimmering as it was in the feeble moonshine,

with a soft, gauzy veil, illumined by the lustrous beauty within, like transparent lace interspersed between the eye and the face of a fair woman.

The only sounds which now soothed, rather than broke the silence, were the pipings of the frogs from the marshes beyond the river, mingled by the distance into a melancholy, modulated concert, the plaintive, oft-repeated cry of the whip-poor-will, as he skimmed beneath the moon under the shadows of the weeping-willows over the glassy eddies, and occasionally the long-drawn, quavering wailings of the brown owls, answering one another from the woodlands on either bank of the river.

The spring had been, as usual, somewhat late, long and dreary. There had been soft and pleasant tricks of weather for a few days at a time, and genial southerly gales for a day or two, and the willows had pushed into full leaf, and the grass had grown fresh and succulent; the snipe had come and for the most part gone northward, without affording much sport to the shooters, owing to the wild and interrupted character of the springtide. And this, in short, had been the first day of real, genial, settled summer-seeming spring.

Trout, it is true, had been captured on Long Island, in the midst of sleet and snow-squalls and east winds, if not in thunder, lightning and in rain; captured from ponds, in which leave to take them must first be angled for with the all-conquering silver hook, and at which, when captured, it is the use to leave behind you your dear-won booty. But to me, at least, the glories of Long Island are departed; and its once noble woods and waters, haunted by the red deer and the heath-hen, alive with countless hoards of geese, brant, sowl, whose name is like their number, legion, whilom frequented by such choice spirits as Cypress and his jovial crew, who learned therein "to stop a woodcock in a brake, with the finger of instinct and the eye of faith," and to "cut down a leatherhead, at sunrise, skating before a stiff north-easter at three miles a minute," are now but the forlorn ghosts of themselves, the suburban cockney sporting grounds of New York merchant princes, or of the verdant and impudent abortions known as the rising generation of Young New York and Progress.

Therefore, be it known, I had neither gone, nor thought of going down, to those once-famous fishing places; and although instigated by the annual instinctive æstrus, which periodically seizes the angler, the keen shot and the ardent hunter, and certain signs and seasons of the times, I had overhauled my Conroys and my Relleys, oiled my click-reels, looked to my lines that they were unfrayed and sound, and untouched of mildew or dry-rot, seen that my bottoms and gut foot-lengths were tough and round and responsible, and gloated over my stock of flies, of many names and nations, the collection of years spent in wanderings far and near; I had little intention, little hope, of wetting a long line or landing a two-pounder, whether in the salt creeks of the Atlantic shores, or in the mountain torrents of the Appalachian ridge or in the ice-cold rivers of the far Northwest.

Still, it must be admitted, I had been thinking all day long about my favorite sport, of which the season and its especial fitness so pleasantly reminded me, so that had any brother of the gentle craft been present, or any accessible water, likely to afford sport, occurred to my imagination, I had incontinently packed up my traps and committed myself to the speed of the famous iron horse. But I was alone, and I bethought me of no nearer place than the wild Garden river, or the long, foamy ripples of the beautiful Sault St. Marie or the splendid trout streams of Lake Superior;\* with a sigh, therefore, I lighted my Indian pipe and proceeded to puff away my chagrin in a cloud of delicately flavored kinnikinnic, lubricated by a moderate sip of exquisite Victoria punch, a beverage, indeed, worthy of the royal lady in honor of whom it was named by her gallant 32d.

Just at this moment, however, when the mellowed regrets were vanishing before the soothing influences of the Indian, there

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\*The Lake Superior region was "Frank Forester's" favorite fishing resort for many years, and he there enjoyed the most superb troutting then to be had in the country. This, however, was long prior to the completion of the Wisconsin Central Railroad, which gives safe and speedy access to the glorious sporting region about Lake Superior; and particularly the trout streams debouching into Chequamegon Bay, near Ashland, on the south shore, and the magnificent Nepigon river, on the north shore, where may be had the finest trout-fishing in America. Whether for its scenery or the angling it affords the Lake Superior country is unsurpassed.

W. W.

came to my ear the clatter of fast hoofs and the rapid roll of little wheels rattling up the drive, while the many-voiced clamor of pointer, setter, Newfoundland and terriers announced a late arrival. A small bustle followed, quick questions and answers, and in came the servant bearing a telegraphic message, marked "in haste, forward."

It was from a trusty comrade and right jolly angler, who had pitched his tent far from the city in the beautiful valley of Chemung, and being satisfied that his lines had fallen in pleasant places, troubled us of the seaboard but rarely, either by literary communications or personal interviews, which last had for the last year or two become like angel's visits, indeed few and far between. So that I was somewhat astonished as well as greatly pleased when I read his name as I glanced hurriedly at the foot of the dispatch.

"Frank Forester"—thus it ran. "Stony Brook, Clattering Creek, have been foul, are fine. Trout plenty, prime, taking. Dine at seven. Erie road. Now or never.

LANCELOT LANGDALE.

"Cotton's Cabin, Cohocton."

Whereunto I replied, incontinently:

"Lancelot Langdale.—Now. Dinner to-morrow. FRANK FORESTER.  
"The Cedars."

Paid the dispatches, dismissed the messenger, happy with a dram of cogniac and a cigar, devoted my evening to a reinvestigation and selection of tackle, to an assorting of ankle shoes, shepherd's plaid trousers, shooting jackets, creels, sandwich boxes and dram bottles, supped lightly, turned in early, slept like a dormouse, till my man dragged me out of bed, two hours before sunrise, and found myself, just as Dan Phoebus made his appearance above the summit of the Palisades, creaking and clattering along the Patterson branch of the Erie Railroad, in a fearful perturbation of mind, and haunted by a sort of insane idea that I ought to have insured my life and limbs before starting, in order to run a remote chance of arriving at the terminus with my due share of arms and legs—a rare occurrence, nowadays, on a New York railroad.

For a wonder, however, we passed through safely—whirled through the fair pastoral strath of the Passaic into the wild,

romantic glen of the brawling Ramapo, before the din of the cars, the felling of the old forests and the damming up the crystal waters banished naiad and dryad and the shy oread's train, the loveliest sylvan solitude, the most Arcadian dell of all that have remained unhonored, only because unsung by some immortal bard. Thence onward through the fertile meads and luxuriant dairy farms of lovely Orange county, till, whirling dizzy high in air, over the broad and glassy waters of the Delaware, we rush into Pennsylvania and are lost among the stupendous mountain ridges, bare crags and cliffs of primitive rock, dark forests of evergreen, now skirting the brink of airy precipices, overlooking leagues of valley, hill and champaign, above which it seems to hang suspending, and now thundering over black ravines and roaring cataracts, on giant single arches that outvie that bridge built in the Canton of Uri, by the Bishop Gerold of Einsiedlen, as local history says, but by the devil, as the people tell you, who know better.

At last I found myself disembarked, fishing-rods, gaffs, carpet-bags and sandwich-box, at a quaint-looking little station-house, peeping out of a cluster of cedars and hemlock, about half a mile short of a picturesque village, which was discernible, orchard-embosomed, in a rich meadowy flat, half encircled by a reach of the beautiful Delaware, here a broad, shallow, rapid, rippling river, brawling over a stony bottom, with here and there a large deep pool, in which the waters swept in lazy eddies, clear, but dark as night, owing to its exceeding depth.

At the station-house a wide, well-kept road came down a lap among the wooded hills on the right, leading, as the finger-post informed the traveler, to a city of some size and beauty, lying among the small lakes of New York, to the northward. On the opposite side, through a bold, ragged gap in the left-hand mountains, a mountain torrent rushed in impetuously at an oblique angle, jamming back the current of the Delaware, and almost crossing it before mingling its dark-brown waters, sprinkled with bubbles and foam-flakes, with the majestic river.

From the conductor of the railroad Frank had contrived to pick up some information concerning his friend Lancelot, who, up here among the mountains, was something of a personage,

though he was nobody while showing himself the cleverest young lawyer and most brilliant magazinist of New York, until, a small legacy falling to him, he deserted the dollar-worshipers and their Babel, for a retreat among the lakes. Here he led what the Wall-streeters called a useless life, with a few old friends, a good many old books, a little old wine and an innocent, charitable and kindly heart—a thing which, if it exist at all, has neither value nor honor in the modern Gomorrah. He had learned that, although his place proper—a pretty farm—of some eighty or a hundred acres—lay not far from the inlet of the lovely Seneca, he had bought a scrap of the wildest, barrenest, stoniest, strangest kind of land, up the gorge of the identical ravine before him, where he had established the queerest sort of a building that was ever seen in old Sullivan or in Pennsylvania either, said the matter-of-fact guardian of trains, where he spent some portion of every year, in the spring trout-fishing, in the autumn deer-hunting, and in the dead of winter pursuing the wilder and fiercer denizens, the bear, the cougar and the catamount, which still roamed and roared in those little-frequented solitudes.

Accordingly, no sooner had Frank deposited himself and his traps on the boarded platform before the station-house, before a tall, handsome, light-colored mulatto man, dressed in a buckskin hunting shirt and leggins, and flapped felt hat, round which was lapped a coil of gaudy-colored lake-flies, touched his beaver and inquired, with a sort of welcoming grin, displaying all his fine white teeth, if “dis was de gentleman what Massa Langdale expect? ‘Case if he be, he please come ‘long to de boat, and be dar in no time.”

Finding that he was in the right, the sportsman darkey, in whom Frank imagined a resemblance to an exquisite, dark-curled and exquisitely-bearded coxcomb, who, in former times, had condescended to serve Massa Lancelot, in his days of New York lady-killing, in the capacity of adonizer as well as mentor, became more and more voluble in his speech and mirthful in his greetings, till he, too, having evolved Frank from some dim recess of his memory, welcomed him, with what the French call effusion, to Cotton Cottage, assuring him that “they’d have fine times now, sartain!”

With that he shouldered Frank's valise and rod-cases and led the way down a steep path to the water's edge, where there lay a long, sharp, beautifully-modelled pirogue, cut of the entire trunk of a huge basswood, containing paddles, setting poles, a long rifle and longer fish-spear, and having its bottom carpeted with fresh, green hemlock tips, artistically disposed, and soft as the most luxurious couch of cities. Into the bow of this somewhat ticklish craft he motioned Frank to descend, while, after depositing his burthens amidships, he coiled himself in the stern, and vigorously plying his paddles, sent the light boat skimming across the river and into the mouth of the stream, which, here about fifty feet in width, came pouring down over a stony bottom in a swift, arrowy rush of dark brown water, filling the ravine almost from side to side, and scarce affording room for a broken and irregular foot-path among the bare rocks, the deep fern patches and the occasional patches of alder and red willow, which pushed out here and there in some sheltered cove, where they found soil wherein to flourish, or among the trunks of the lordly pines and feathery hemlocks which rifted their roots in the stern hill-sides.

Nothing could be wilder, nothing more picturesque and even grand at times, than this ravine of the brawling Catasauqua, with the sun gleaming only here and there on the loftiest of the eastern cliffs, or streaming in yellow and loving light through the gaps of the western ridge and dwelling on the soft swells, verdant with thrifty hard-wood, between laps and hollows full of soft blue shadows, while not a wandering ray could touch the foamy ripples and glassy shoots and rapids of the impetuous trout-stream. It was hard work to stem the rush of the ice-cold water, and Frank soon found himself compelled to buckle to the paddle and do his share of the propelling, having the fear of a late arrival and cold provender before his eyes—no pleasant prospect after a long railroad journey, to a hungry and tired man. Swifter waxed the stream, and swifter, narrower the gorge, and more abruptly and angularly winding, at times interrupted by great fallen trees, still root-anchored to the shores from which they had fallen, among the *chevaux-de-frise*-like branches of which it required skillful pilotage, and at times interrupted by

long, shooting rapids, where the stream was so much contracted and ran with such violence that the paddles became useless, and it was only by the exertion of every nerve at two stout setting-poles that the two men succeeded in stemming the mountain rivulet's force.

For about five miles they had threaded the intricacies of the rude glen, the mountains toppling higher and more abruptly overhead, the old trees, solemnly swathed in centennial draperies of moss and ivy, stooping ghost-like over the noisy torrent, and no sound or sight reminding one of human life disturbing the sense of solitude or suggesting the vicinity of man. Once or twice a prowling otter plumped from his rocky station into the pools, as the dug-out approached him; at every hundred yards the little white-winged sandpipers sprang, feebly twittering, from the pebbly banks and fluttered along its margin; once and again the kingfisher swooped and soared before them, bearing away at each plunge a scaly victim; on rounding a projecting stony point a pair of beautiful snow-white egrets rose up, like spirits, against the dark background of the evergreen forest; and, at the same moment, the harsh, clanging cry of the golden eagle came harshly from the cliffs, and his soaring wings intercepted the narrow glimpse of daylight, as he sailed slowly up the gorge.

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*AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.*

## II.

THUS far, since they had entered the wild and desolate ravine of the Cata sauqua, they had passed no spot which could well have been adapted to the site of a human habitation, even of the smallest size and most inferior kind, and no vestige of a road was to be discerned by which access could be had to it from the settlements, except up the channel of the shallow and rapid stream. And as the day gradually declined, and the sunbeams through

the gaps in the hill-tops fell higher and higher up the opposite mountain sides, and dwelt no longer, even for a moment, in the bottom of the valley, Frank began to get somewhat curious as to the domicile to which he was wending his way under auspices so peculiar, and somewhat suspicious as to the nature of the feed which was likely to meet him in the middle of so absolute a wilderness.

Nevertheless, he held on, stoutly plying his paddle or his setting-pole in silence, asking no questions of his dark ferryman, but greatly admiring the picturesque and devious pass which he was traversing. Suddenly, after forcing the canoe, not without the dint of very considerable exertion, up a long shoot of clear, swift, glancing water, where the stream rushed, unbroken, over an inclined plane of smooth rock, the ravine turned an abrupt angle, formed by the projection of a bare, precipitous crag of yellow limestone, narrowing the channel to a third of its usual width, and excluding all upward view, due westward.

With a powerful sweep of his paddle, the steersman brought round the head of the light vessel and she swung round the point in deep water, and lay in a large, circular tranquil pool, some three hundred yards across, embosomed in a sort of lap among the hills, of a milder character than anything which Frank had yet seen on the Catasauqua, and containing on the left bank a few acres of cleared land, pastured by a single cow, a rough Indian shooting-pony and half a dozen ragged-looking mountain sheep.

This pool, at the lower end, was perfectly still, as clear as glass and very deep; but in two different places, at its upper extremity, where two narrow glens, or ghylls, as they would be called in the north country, entered the little amphitheatre from the higher ridges to the south and the westward, the perturbation of its surface, the floating bubbles and foam-flakes, and the whirling eddies, showed that two strong and rapid streams were discharged into it from above.

On the point formed by the union of these two tributaries, or constituents rather, of the Catasauqua, known as the "Stony Brook" and the "Clattering Creek," which was a shelving bank of gravel at the water's edge, covered by a magnificent grove of the largest hemlocks Frank had ever observed, growing with

their great trunks far apart, but their wide, feathery branches mingled above into a canopy of impenetrable verdure, stood in a small, sheltered nook, scooped, as it would seem, out of the sheltering wood, the cottage, which he recognized as the welcome bourne of his journey.

“Cotton’s Cabin,” as the owner had christened it, after the friend and brother angler of dear old Izaac Walton, was the smallest and least pretending, as it was the quaintest and prettiest of primitive cottages. In front it presented a face of thirty feet in length, divided into three compartments, that in the centre presenting an advanced gable of a story and a half in height, with a dormer window above the rudely-arched doorway, with its quaintly-carved inscription on the key-block, and a gigantic pair of elk antlers affixed to the wall above it. In the spaces, on either side, which were but one story in height, was one large, latticed window, and no more. The whole edifice was framed of rude pine logs, with the bark still on them, those in the wings, if they may be so called, running horizontally, dove-tailed into one another at the ends, those of the centre standing perpendicularly, morticed into the plates and ground-sills. The door-posts, lintels and window frames were just as rugged of materials and as rustic of manufacture as the remainder of the building; and the roof, which widely overhung the eaves, was covered with scolloped slabs of pine bark, overlapping each other like shingles. A bright, fitful light glancing from one of the windows, out of the shadows of the hemlock grove, and a blue wreath of smoke winding up in strong contrast against the black foliage of the evergreens, gave pleasant token of preparation and of hospitable welcome in the wilderness. There was no sign of cultivation, no flower pot, no patch of vegetables near the house, only a narrow gravel walk winding up among the grape stems to the door, from a small dock, at which lay moored another dug-out, similar to that in which the voyagers were approaching, a couple of Indian birch canoes and a light cedar skiff, double-headed like a whale-boat, built for a pair of sculls or paddles. But the ground under the trees was beautifully smooth, well-kept and cleared of fallen leaves, the hemlocks themselves were free from dead

branches and dry, sapless limbs, and on the stems of one or two, in the foreground, the native vines and creepers had been trained with some care and grew luxuriantly, with their long trailers and bright hues offering a pleasant contrast to the dark formality of the evergreens. The only animals visible were a noble jet-black Newfoundland dog lying at length, with his head couched between his massive paws, on the door-sill, and a huge eagle owl, sitting on a rustic perch, to which one leg was attached by a long, light chain, devouring part of a fish which had been given to him, and occasionally wakening all the echoes of the hills by his solemn and melancholy shouts, waugh-oh! waugh-oh! rendering the wild aspect of the place wilder and more outlandish.

“Dar de cabin, sah,” exclaimed the mulatto, brightening up as they came into sight of the rustic lodge, “and dar old Cappun, de dog, and dar de owl; and dar come Massa Langdale, too, I guess,” as the door opened and the owner, a tall, fine-looking young man of some eight-and-twenty or thirty years, made his appearance on the lawn, if it may so be called, attired sportsmanly in a tweed shooting jacket and trousers, a low-crowned felt hat and a pair of stout shooting-shoes.

“How are you Frank?” he hallooed in a clear, strong voice. “Devilish glad to see you at the cabin, now that you’ve got to it, which I suppose you gave up in despair of ever doing. I should have come down to pilot you up myself, but I’ve got a queer sort of cockney chap up here, only he’s not a cockney, but a New York chap, that knows more about fishing than all of us together, to hear his own talk. He’s a Wall-streeter, I believe, but he came up to me upon the strength of a letter, and I can’t get rid of him; but I fancy another day or two will finish him, for he *frames*, as you say in Yorkshire, very badly, and he’s death on tackle. But come in, come in; ain’t you thirsty?”

Whereupon, replying to his friend’s greeting so soon as he found room to put in a word, and admitting that something long and cool wouldn’t go far wrong, Frank followed his friend into the interior of the fishing-hut, first pausing to note the invitation, carved in rude characters of old black letter, upon a slab, beneath

the branching antlers, which ran thus, in the owner's antiquated doggerel—

## COTTON'S CABIN.

1850.

Rest, angler, here y'r weary feet;  
A brother angler bids you stay,  
If hearty greeting, healthy meat,  
Mild drink to moisten thirsty clay,  
A-bed betimes and blythe uprising,  
Be welcomes worth an angler's prizing.

The entrance, which was had through a hatch-door, the upper half of which was glazed, admitted them into a small vestibule of some ten feet square, with a door in the centre of each side. Its walls were plainly wainscotted with unpainted but neatly varnished pine wood, of which also were all the doors, window-casings and wood-work of the house; the floor, composed of octagonal pine blocks, similar to those used in the old wooden pavement of Broadway, was covered by a neat red and white matting, in the centre of which stood a solid octagon-shaped pine table, strewn with powder-flasks, shot-pouches, reels, fly-books and many of the implements and materials necessary for the angler's or shooter's art. The wainscotting was hung around with rifles, shot-guns of several sizes and calibres, rods of all sorts and dimensions, from the huge eighteen-foot salmon rod and powerful trolling-rod for the great mascalonge and pickerel of the lakes, to the neatest and lightest single-handed trout-rod, built especially for the use of the smallest mountain streams; with landing-nets and gaffs of new construction, and Indian pipes and paddles, and fish-spears, interspersed, swinging from the deer antlers affixed at intervals along the cornice, festooned with Indian-tanned hides of the deer, the wolf, the cougar and the loup cervier, none of them, even at that day, rare or unfrequent visitants of those rude and thinly populated districts. Two glass-fronted corner cupboards in the upper angles of the room displayed, the one a beautiful assortment of lines, bottoms, foot-links, hanks of salmon-gut, reels, winches, hooks of every form and description, bait-kettles, creels and a complete assortment of costly feathers, furs, silks, gold and silver twists, and all the

necessaries for fly-making; the other a show of all the sportsman can require for shooting, whether upland or lowland, mountain or forest, field or fen, sea or river, which would not have been overlooked in Cooper's most perfect showcases; four massive settles of the same fashion and material as the table, with deer-skin cushions, completed the furniture of this primitive but pleasant and characteristic apartment.

The door to the left gave admission to a sitting-room of the same size and corresponding furniture, with the exception that, instead of arms, antlers and furry tapestries, its varnished but unpainted walls were adorned by some fine engravings from Landseer and by two sets of well-filled book-shelves, one on each side of the great fire place, in which blazed, not unpleasant, even at that season, in that wild spot, among those bleak and chilly mountains, a merry fire of pine knots and rock-maple. Two double settles, one on each side the fire, four cushioned arm-chairs, two tables, one in the centre spread with a white cloth and laid with three covers, and one beneath the end window—for this room possessed two—covered with books, writing materials, a chess-board and a few knick-knacks and ornamental articles; we will add a noble jet-black bear-skin, playing the part of hearth-rug, and the tale is told of the decorements—as Caleb Balderstone would have called them—of the *salon* of Cotton's Cabin.

It was not into this, however, that Lancelot led the way; but throwing open the right-hand door from the hall, "I am sure, Frank," he said, "after your burning race at the tail of the Erie tea-kettle and your long pull up the Catasauqua, you would rather have a cool bath than anything else, while the cool drink is getting ready. So *voila* our common sleeping-room, *voici* the bathing-tub,"—pointing to a huge cedar tub, sparkling with almost ice-cold water,—"and here comes Scipio Africanus, bearing your traps. So now to make yourself presentable with what speed you will, and then to supper, or dinner, if you like it better, with what appetite you may. And now as to the cool drink, will you London porter, will you cider-cup, will you sherry, will you claret?—the ardent we eschew, save in the fishing-flasks, as an antidote to wet feet, chills and fever and such

blest appendages of the time, the place and the profession. What say you?"

"Cider-cup," replied Frank, briefly, who had already extricated a change of habiliments from his crammed valise, and divested himself of his dusty jacket; and with the words, "I'll see to it myself," his hospitable host left the chamber, followed by the conqueror of Hannibal, showing his ivories from ear to ear, and chuckling to himself at he knew not what. Meanwhile Frank, though he applied himself with all due diligence to the renovation of his person, curiously observed this mountain bed-chamber, and examined all its apparatus; for, wanderer as he was, and acquainted, like Ulysses of old, "with the cities and the ways of many mortals," yet of a verity, like of this, at home or abroad, far or near, never had he seen.

Like the sitting-room, of which he had caught a glimpse through the open door, this chamber had two windows, one overlooking the basin of the main river, in front, one looking from the east end, through the hemlock grove, toward the "Clattering Creek," one of the cataracts of which could be seen among the evergreens, glancing like a pillar of snow through the shadows. Like that also, opposite to the front window, this had a wide, open fire-place, with a few brands smouldering on the hearth. But herewith all similarity to that or any other room Frank had ever seen, disappeared.

Beds, properly so called, there were none; but, in lieu thereof, two oblong boxes of pine wood, about six feet, or a little over, in length, by three in breadth, heaped to a foot above the brim, with an inviting white pillow, and a 42d Tartan plaid by way of coverlet, occupied the two spaces on each side of the fire; and one, in all respects similar, ran across the front of the room, with its foot toward the door, occupying nearly two-thirds of the area of the chamber. To make up for this occupation of space, two massive slabs under the windows projected over the foot of two beds, one supporting three basins, ewers and washing apparatus complete, and the other a toilet-glass, razors, brushes and combs and all the needfuls for a gentleman's uprising. Above the head of each bed an angular cupboard, supported on brackets, at four feet from the ground, was ready to receive the occupant's wardrobe;

a tanned deer-skin for a foot-cloth and a four-legged stool to each. Such was *the* bed-chamber of Cotton's Cabin.

But such passing observation, for Frank's inquiring mind, was insufficient; it struck his eye, at once, that the garniture of the beds spoke little of feather-bed, hair-mattress, Whitney blankets or down-stuffed coverlets, wherefore see he must, before sleeping. To the brim, or, by'r lady! a little above the brim of the bunks, perhaps two feet in depth, were piled the soft and feathery tips of the fragrant hemlock, with the stems downward, layer above layer, the softest and balmiest bed on which ever reclined weary hunter. Above these was spread a tanned deer-skin, with the hair downward, sheets of the cleanest but the coarsest linen, scented with the wild herbs on which they had been bleached, and over all the warm and beautiful hill-plaid, the quaint but favorite wear of the eccentric but warm-hearted owner of the cabin. Scarcely had Frank completed his survey, when Lancelot made his entree, followed by Africanus bearing an oaken salver, on which was a mighty pewter tankard, burnished till it shone like silver. It was filled—I commend it to you, noble reader, as the best and most cooling of summer beverages—with a quart of sound last year's cider from the cask, a half-pint of brown sherry, a modicum of white sugar and one slice of lemon. The surface was brown as mahogany with grated nutmeg, and thereon floated a bunch of thyme, summer-savory and sweet-basil, bobbing about among great lumps of ice, glittering and lucent as the diamonds of Golconda.

“Was hael, Frank Forester,” exclaimed the host, raising the tankard to his lips, not merely in ceremonial hospitality, as was seen by the length of the pull which followed, and then handing it to his guest.

“Drink hael, Sir Lancelot,” elevating the tankard more and more, till its bottom corresponded to the plane of the horizon, and then lowering it with a grateful “A—h! that does a fellow good when he was as thirsty as I was just now. But how's this, Sir Lancelot? Is not this shabby treatment toward Wall street—or don't the broker drink?”

“Only brandy,” replied Langdale, glancing round to see that the door was shut. “Nothing stronger than that, nor anything

much weaker, I fancy. He was afraid, it seems, he should find nothing fit to drink up here among the mountains, so he brought up a gallon of old Otard, which, seeing that I drink it not, he has well nigh consumed to his own cheek. I confess, I look to its going with some interest, surmising that, it gone, he will go soon afterward."

"A most considerate and delicate broker," returned Frank, laughing.

"But for heaven's sake, Frank, not a word about Wall street or brokers before him. In the first place, because I don't know, for certain, that he comes from the one or *is* the other. In the second, because, though a bit of an ass, he is not a bad fellow, and brought me a recommend from a capital good one. In the third, because if he plead guilty of both, it may be no fault of his that he hangs out in a den of thieves and pursues a dirty calling—it may be he can dwell nowhere, and do nothing, else. And in the fourth, especially, because he is under my roof, whatever he may be, and must neither be quizzed nor roasted, far less affronted."

"A second Daniel," Frank answered, with a mock obeisance. "I never roast or quizz anybody, much less muffs in my own friends' houses. Nor do I admire brokers so much that I love to talk either to them or about them. In this case I will eschew the word *break* altogether; I will *fracture* my rod, should, which the gods forefend, such calamity fall out; *rend* my line; *crack* my gut, *lux* my hooks; and, should occasion be, *batter* or *bang* the the head of any who shall deserve it; but devil a thing will I break, no! not even silence, if I cannot do so without saying "broke."

"Well! well!" said Lancelot, "come along, you are rigged, I see; and dinner, such as it is, is ready. And you shall be made known in due form to Mr. P. St. Clair Robins, of New York. Is not that high?"

"Immense. What does P. stand for?"

"Peleg, I fancy. But he calls himself St. Clair only; for shortness, I suppose. In his signatures, however, out comes the detested P."

And, therewithal, passing across the little hall, and entering

into the sole sitting-room, which served the company for library, saloon and dining room, they found the object of their conversation, a personable figure enough, elaborate of well-oiled beard and whiskers and somewhat too accurately gotten up for a free-and-easy sportsman's feed like this, reading the last number of "The Spirit," in the red light of the jolly wood fire.

"Forester, let me make you acquainted with my friend, Mr. St. Clair Robins; Mr. Robins, this is Frank Forester; you were looking over one of his books last night."

So they bowed, and shook hands and were mutually charmed, of course; neither of them caring a snap of his finger whether the other were crucified before breakfast; and, that duty done, Frank turned reproachfully to his friend—

"*Et tu Brute!*" he said; "at least from you, I expected not this outrage. Among these unutterable hills and unpronounceable rivers, where few read and none write, I did hope to sink the abominable shop. Here, at least, I had hoped to escape the enemy."

Here Mr. St. Clair Robins looked at our friend wistfully and then at Lancelot doubtfully, as if hesitating whether he was crazy or in his cups.

But Lancelot laughed and inquired—"What enemies, Frank? Mr. Robins imagines you see *snakes!*"

"Pardon me, Mr. Robins, I never have been so unfortunate as to enjoy *del. tre.*; and even if I had, though being terribly afraid of all the serpent tribe, I am sure it is not they whom I should have seen. No! welcome snakes! save me from publishers alone. From the least wriggling dealer in cheap obscenity to the vast baronial constrictors, who, swallowing authors, vomit their torrents of folios; these are the terrors of the poor penman's waking hours, the tortures of his feverish dreams. Here I had hoped, fondly but fruitlessly, to hear of no books but fly-books, no book-makers unless on the Leger and the Derby, and lo! on my first visit into this most inhospitable cabin—there now! stop that, Lancelot; I foresee in the curl of your lip, an allusion to Uncle Tom!—my appetite is taken away by base allusions to my miserable trade of grinding gammon to fill the—"

"Halt, there!" interrupted Lancelot, "we'll see about the

appetite before we proceed, for I observe that Scipio has done his duty; how, it rests to be seen."

So they seated themselves cosily round the small round-table, whereon appeared but a single dish, flanked by a plate of halved lemons, a decanter of sherry and a long cork—in the blaze of the fire flashed a porter-bottle and at St. Clair Robins' right hand his favorite cogniac stood sentry over his plate.

"No soup, Frank," said Lancelot, uncovering his dish, whereon reclined, on a neat white napkin, so exquisitely broiled that all the fair freshness of their silvery armor, sanguine spotted, all the innocent tri-color of their resplendent fins, was preserved intact, two lordly brook-trout.

"Three-pounders, by the Lord Harry!" exclaimed Frank, almost bounding from his seat.

"Good boy, Frank," replied his host approvingly. "Two, fifteen ounces and a half, this fellow," tapping the largest with the fish-knife, "and the little one about an ounce lighter; but the little chap fought the harder fight. Did he not, Mr. Robins?"

"Nearly five minutes longer, I reckon," answered the Yorker. "Now that's a capital good trout, a'most as good as ours on the Island."

"You don't see many so heavy fish as those on the Island, now-a-days, Mr. Robins," interposed Frank, "two or three in a season at best. The general run is getting small, I hear, for I have not fished there many a year."

"Well, I can't say," replied Robins; which was strictly true, for he had never wet a line in his life in any of those beautiful and now strictly preserved waters, though, like many others of his townsmen, he was very fond of talking about Lif. Snedecors and Sam Camans. "Have you them as fine in England?"

"Our trout in England, in my day, were much larger, but much fewer in number and much shyer. A five-pounder was no wonder then, and who would not rather take two or three brace of such than ten or twelve dozen half-pounders—sometimes a monster is taken; one on record, caught in the Rennet or the Avon, above twenty pounds; and equally large fish have been caught in the Blackwater, in Ireland. Thames trout rarely run less than five or over ten pounds; but they are rare and solitary fish.

But a friend, who fished all Great Britain last year, tells me that except in close waters, which he did not try, the trout are very numerous but exceedingly small, owing, no doubt, to the waters being over-fished. Another slice, Mr. Lancelot, and if you say sherry, I say sherry too. What say you, Mr. Robins?"

"Allow me to take my brandy-and-water to your sherry."

"How about the appetite, Frank?"

"Pshaw! what have trout to do with appetite? Anybody can eat trout at any time; to catch them's the thing. Have you a fair sprinkling of such as these here?"

"There are always two or three brace in the pool and a sprinkling in all the basins down the Catasauqua, and I have all the fishing to myself, no sportsmen having *cottoned* as yet, except for a flying visit, to these rude regions. There are some very large fish in the deeps of the Delaware, at the tails of the eddies, but no one will believe it, because they cannot be taken by bait at all, nor by a fly, except at moonlight; and I am not anxious to persuade them about it. I mean that we two should go down when the moon is full and have a dash at them. Stony Brook has some good pools, but the fish run smaller; a pound-and-a-halfer is a big one, and the average is not above three-quarters. Mr. Robins had good sport this morning, up it."

"Twenty-one fish—eighteen pounds in all," said that worthy complacently; "but it's the deuce and all on tackle."

"Full of fallen trees and logs?" asked Frank. "They are the deuce sometimes."

"No," replied Lancelot, "a beautiful gravel bottom, with swift eddies and nice whirling holes; here and there a fall of two or three feet, and here a glancing rapid over rock. It is the branches overhead that bother Mr. Robins. The brook is wholly overarched, and it is difficult to one who is not used to it."

"I believe you, it is," said Robins. "Why, I broke three of Conroy's best tips, and carried away I don't know how many leaders."

"Ah! that's bad. But you got a nice creel-full, after all. Do you use fly?"

"No, *sir*; I stick to the good old-fashioned worm. But you won't try a glass of my Otard?"

"Thank you. I'll pledge you in a stoup of Sir Lancelot's Bordeaux; it used to be worth tasting."

"It is still, Frank; nearly the last that is left of the old Sneyd and Barton. Now, Master Scipio, what else have you got for dinner?"

"Pigeon-pie, Massa Langdale, and broil' ducks. Mus' git on wi' dat, Massa"—turning a deprecating glance to Frank. "Berry little game in de woods now—berry little Massa let me kill, any how."

"Pigeon-pie and broiled ducks! I should as soon have expected turbot and lobster-sauce or larded sweet-breads."

"Scipio has only realized the poet's fancy; 'he has found out a gift for his fair, he has found where the wood-pigeons breed,'" said Langdale; "and, as for the ducks, they are only four of a brood of unfortunate flapper summer-ducks, which I came across in a little tarn in the middle of a cranberry marsh, which is, in fact, the source of the 'Stony Brook.' I knocked these over and left a couple to console the anxious mother. But Scipio is quite right; this is the worst time of the year in which for me to entertain; for you must know we get mighty little butcher's meat here. Our rods and guns, backed by the pork-barrel, feed us, in the main. A month or two later, I could have given you venison, ruffed grouse, and, by chance, a turkey or bear-meat. Now the devil an ounce will you get, unless it be a venison or bear ham. I believe I'll send Scip. over the hills, one of these days, to Lanesboro', to see if he can't hunt us up a lamb or two."

"You have a road, then, to some civilized resort of man?"

"If you call it a road. It is the wildest, rocky wood-path, impassable to anything less sure-footed than a Pyrenean mule, or old, ragged 'Mohawk' yonder. It scales the ridge seven hundred feet above this, crosses the head of the Clattering Creek on two pine logs laid side by side, threads an intricate cranberry marsh, and comes down a regular rock stair-case into the gorge of the 'Starucca,' and so fifteen miles off into Lanesboro'."

"And this 'Clattering Creek,' what sort of water is it?" asked Frank; "that I may learn at once the whole lay of the land."

"A real mountain burn."

"I'm thinking of trying it myself to-morrow," said Robins. "Mr. Langdale tells me it can only be fished with bait, and that's what I'm best at. Besides, there are bigger fish in it."

"But fewer," answered Langdale. "No, Robins, I'd advise you to stick to the 'Stony,' unless you'll try a cast of the fly with us over the pool and down the Catasauqua."

"No, no," replied St. Clair, half indignantly, "none of your flies for me, and no canoe-work. But why do you advise me against it; you said there were no trees, bait-fishing and big fish. What is there against it?"

"The toughest crag-climbing and the most difficult fishing you ever tried."

"What like fishing is it, Lancelot?" asked Frank.

"Exactly what that capital sportsman, Colquhoon of Luss, describes in his excellent book, the Moor and Loch, under the title of the Moorburn."

"I remember," replied Frank. "Is it as bad as that?"

"Worse; but the fish much larger. I have caught them up to two pounds."

"I should like to hear about that. Can't you read it to me?" asked the Wall-street man, eager for information.

"I've no objection," said Langdale, "if Frank has not. He has read it fifty times already."

"I'm convenient," answered Frank, laying down his knife and fork, the last duck having disappeared.

"Well, then, here goes. Now, Scipio, look alive and clear away the table; bring us our pipes and coffee; and then we'll to bed, for we must be afoot by daybreak."

And with the word he rose, and, after turning over a few volumes on his crowded shelves, brought down the volume in question, with its pages underlined, and interlined, and filled with marginal notes and references. This done, he ensconced himself in the chimney-corner, threw on a fresh log, and read as follows:

"In most of the small Highland burns, there is a succession of cataracts and pools, with a parapet of rock rising perpendicularly on each side, and often scarcely footing enough for a dog to pass. The greater proportion of picturesque-looking brethren of

the angle would almost start at the idea of continuing their pastime under such disadvantages. They therefore make a circuit, and come down again upon the burn, where it is more easy to fish, and the ground less rugged. The trout in these places are thus left till many of them grow large, and each taking possession of a favorite nook, drives all the smaller fry away. The difficulty of reaching these places is, I admit, often great, the angler having sometimes to scramble up on his hands and knees, covered with wet moss or gravel, and then drag his fishing rod after him. These lynes should always be fished up stream, otherwise the moment you appear at the top of the waterfall or rock, the trout are very like to see you, and slink into their hiding-place. The burn, however, must always be low, as at no other time can you distinguish the snug retreat of these little tyrants, which indeed they often leave, during the slightest flood, in search of prey. By fishing up the stream, your head will be on a level with the different eddies and pools, as they successively present themselves, and the rest of your person out of sight. Hold the baited hook with the left hand, jerking out the rod, under-handed, with your right, so as to make the bait fall softly at the lower end of the pool. The trout always take their station either there or at the top where the water flows in, ready to pounce on worms, snails, slugs, etc., as they enter or leave the pool. Should a trout seize the bait, a little time may be given to allow it to gorge, which it will most likely do without much ceremony. If large, care must be taken to prevent it from getting to the top of the lynn, which may probably harbor another expectant. The best plan is, if possible, to persuade it to descend into the pool below. Having deposited the half-pounder in your creel, you will now crawl upon hands and knees, just so near the top of the lynn as will enable you to drop the bait immediately below the bubbling foam, nearly as favorite a station for an overgrown, monopolizing trout as the other. Except in such situations, the burn trout seldom exceeds a quarter of a pound, and may be pulled out with single gut, without much risk of breaking it. In these lynes, however, I have occasionally taken them upward of a pound, which is easily accounted for. As soon as the trout grows to a sufficient size to intimidate his

pigmy neighbors, he falls back into the best pool for feeding, not occupied by a greater giant than himself, and as these lyns are almost always in precipices very difficult of access, he remains undisturbed and alone, or with a single companion, driving all others away, until he may at last attain to a pound weight.' ”

“ Now, I fear, brother angler, that you are in some respects what the indefatigable Gael would call a ‘picturesque angler’; so I advise you in good faith, stick to the ‘Stony Brook’; fish it from the long fall carefully down. Scipio shall attend you with the landing-net and plenty of worms and minnows; the last, hooked through the lip and back fin, will do you yeoman service in the lower pools; and Frank and I will join you in the afternoon.”

“ Agreed,” said Mr. Robins; “ I’ll take your advice, I believe; and now I guess I’ll turn in. Good night.”

“ Time, too,” said Frank, laughing. “ He was beginning to get a little white about the gills. Could that be his old Otard; he did not drink so much of it.”

“ Lord help you, no! he’d drink a gallon of it and no hurt. No! But he will persist in smoking Cavendish tobacco and kinnikinnic, because he has seen me do it, and, I believe, imagines that it confers some special powers of trout-catching. But come, suppose we turn in, too; you’ll be tired after your journey, and a good night’s rest will give a steady hand and clear eye to-morrow.”

#### “Volontiers.”

So they incontinently joined the Wall street man, who declared, half asleep, that the bed was not so very bad, after all; while Frank, once ensconced in the fragrant sheets, swore, by the great god Pan, patron of hunters, that never had bed so sweet, so soft, so warm, in every way so excellent, received the limbs of weary hunter. And so, indeed, it proved; for, until Scipio made his entree, with his announcement, “Breakfast soon be ready, Massa; sun he’m ‘mose up now,” no one stirred or spoke during the livelong night.

Thereon they all turned, like the Iron Duke, not over, but out. Their sporting toilets were soon made; but Frank and Lancelot, in their old shepherd’s plaid jackets and trews and hob-nailed fishing shoes, could not but exchange glances and smiles at the

elaborate rig of their friend, which some Broadway artist had, it was evident, elaborated from a Parisian fashion-plate—the high-boots of exquisitely enameled leather, the fine doeskin trousers, the many-pocketed, pear-buttoned shooting jacket of fawn-colored silk plush, the batiste neckerchief and waistcoat, point device, with green and silver fishes embroidered on a blue ground, and, to complete the whole, a cavalier hat, in which, but that it lacked the king's black feather, Rupert might well have charged at Marston Moor or Naseby. He seemed, however, so happy, that it would have been as useless as ill natured to indoctrinate him; for evidently, as an angler, the man was hopelessly incurable, though, as Frank observed, for Wall street, he was wonderfully decent.

His weapon was a right good Conroy's general-fishing rod, but without reel, and having its line, an unusually stout silk one, with a superb salmon-gut bottom, which in good hands would have held a twenty-pounder, made carefully fast to the top funnel; eschewing all use of the rings and destroying all chance of the rod's regularly bending to its work. But again, to counsel would but have been to offend; so our friends held their peace.

The smoked venison ham, broiled troutlings, dry toast and black tea, which furnished their morning meal, were soon finished; and forth they went into the delicious, breezy air of the quiet summer morning, not a sound disturbing the solitude, except the splash and rippling of the rapid waters, the low voices of the never-silent pine tops and the twittering of the swallows, as they skimmed the limpid pool.

Up the gorge of the Stony Brook, followed by Scipio, with bait of all kinds enough to have kept the kraken fat for one day at least, a large creel at his back and gaff and landing-net in hand, away went St. Clair Robins, gay and joyous and confident; and then, but not till then quoth Forester—

“ And whither we?”

“ To the other side of the pool. You may see the big fish rising under the alders, there, in the shadow of the big hill, from this distance. That shadow will hang there till noon, while all this side of the basin will be in blazing sunshine. Not a fish

will bite here, I'll warrant me, till three o'clock, while we'll fill our basket there with good ones, certain. The best fish in the pool lies under that round-headed stone, just in the tail of the strong eddy, where the 'Clattering Creek' comes in, in the broken water. I rate him a six-pounder, and have saved him for you all the spring. As soon as the sun turns westward, and the hemlocks' shadows cross the white water, you shall kill him, and then we'll away to the Wall street man;" and therewith the larger birch canoe was manned, paddled gently over to the shady side of the pool and moored in about twenty-foot water, and then, the rods being put together, the reels secured and the lines carried duly through the rings, the following colloquy followed:

"What flies do you most affect here, Lancelot?" asked Frank.

"Any, at times, and almost all," answered Langdale. "In some weather I have killed well with middle-sized gaudy lake-flies; but my favorites, on the whole, are all the red, brown, orange and yellow hackles, and the blue and yellow duns. And yours?"

"My favorite of all is a snipe feather and mouse body; next to that the black and the furnace hackles."

"And you will use them to-day?"

"I will; the snipe wing for my stretcher. I mean to kill the big chap with him this evening."

"Be it so! to work."

And to work they went; but, though most glorious the sport to enjoy, or even to see performed gnostically, to read of it described, is as little interesting as to describe it is difficult. Suffice it to say, that, before the sun had begun to turn westward, sixteen brace and a half were fairly brought to basket by our anglers, one a three pound and a halfer, three two pounders, there or thereabout; not a fish under a pound—all smaller were thrown back unscathed—and very few so small as that, all beautifully fed fish, big-bellied, small-headed, high in color, prime in condition. At one o'clock they paddled leisurely back to the cabin, lunched frugally on a crust of bread and a glass of sherry, and awaited the hour when the hemlock's shadow should be on the white water.

At the moment, they were there; and lo! the big trout was feeding fiercely on the natural fly.

"Be ready, Frank, and when next he rises drop your fly right in the middle of his bell."

"Be easy, I mean it." His line, as he spoke, was describing an easy circle around his head; the fish rose not. The second revolution succeeded; the great trout rose, missed his object, disappeared; and, on the instant, right in the centre of the bell, ere the inmost circle had subsided, the snipe feather fell and fluttered. With an arrowy rush, the monster rose, and as his broad tail showed above the surface, the merry music of the resonant click-reel told that Frank had him. Well struck, he was better played, killed unexceptionably; in thirteen minutes he lay fluttering on the greensward, lacking four ounces, a six-pounder. The snipe feather and mouse body won the day in a canter. So off they started, up the Stony Brook, to admire the feats of P. St. Clair Robins. It was not long ere they found him; he had reached the lower waters of the brook, full of beautiful scours, eddies, whirlpools and basins, and was fishing quietly down it, wading about knee deep, with his bait—he was roving with a minnow—some ten yards down the stream, playing naturally enough in the clear, swirling waters. Some trees on the bank hung thickly over his head; a few yards behind him was a pretty rocky cascade, and above that an open upland glade, lighted up by a gleam of the westering sun; and, altogether, with his gay garb, he presented quite a picturesque, if not a very sportsmanly appearance.

"After all," said Frank, as, unseen themselves, they stood observing him, "he does not do it so very badly as one might have expected."

But before the words had passed his lips, a good fish, at least a pounder, threw itself clear out of the water and seized his minnow. In a second, in the twinkling of an eye, by a movement never before seen or contemplated by mortal angler, he ran his right hand up to the top of the third joint of his rod, which he held perpendicularly aloft, and with his left grasped his line, mid length, and essayed to drag the trout by main force out of his element. The tackle was stout, the stream strong, the bottom

slippery, the fish active, and, before any one could see how it was done, hand and foot both slipped, the line parted, the rod crashed in the middle, the fish went over the next fall with a joyous flirt of his tail, and the fisherman—hapless fisherman—measured his own length in the deepest pool of the Stony Brook.

He was soon fished out, equipped in dry rigging, comforted with a hot glass of his favorite cogniac; but he would not be consoled. He was off at daylight the following morning, and, for aught that I have heard, Cotton's Cabin beheld him nevermore.

As for Lancelot and Frank, how they fished the "Clattering Creek" at midday, and the rapids and whirlpools of the Cata-sa-qua in the gray gloaming, and the broad reaches of the Delaware in the glimmering moonlight; and how they fed and what they said, and how, in the end, they sped, is it not written in the Book of Lancelot, and will it not appear, when called for by a clamorous public, in the Magazine of Graham?

## *A BLAZE AT BARNEGAT.*

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IT is a wild drive from Key Port, on New York Bay, through the great pine woods of New Jersey, to Barnegat; and we were, on the whole, a wildish party who set out on it on a dark December night of 1845, after the sun had set. Two wagons, with brisk teams and rollicking drivers, carried us, our traps, our provender, and, last but not least, our heavy guns and ammunition.

Jolly 'Lishe T——n, mine host of the old Pavilion—never was there a better heart, seldom a better shot than thou wert, good 'Lishe T——n! Many a day's fun have we had in good old times, many a night's frolic, but shall never have any more; for that warm heart is cold, and thou art gone where, at least, there is no more shooting. But not the less for the thought of what should or might be, were we on that night gay and joyous; these and Bill T——r, and one more who shall be nameless, for he is—worse than dead—altered, estranged, a living friend no longer.

At Monmouth we stopped, baited our nags with that most famous of all veterans of the turf, Uncle Tom Laird, and moderately liquored with our friend Gentleman Joey, the pilot of the unrivaled *Fashion*;—then on, on again, through the dim shades and the tall pines, onward—until toward morning, cold, chilled to the bone, yawning, half asleep, half awake, we stopped in the very heart of the pines, at a low-browed wayside hostelry, with a large pair of stag antlers above the door, and there warmed our

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NOTE.—When Samuel Swan originated the "Southern Military Gazette," at Montgomery, Alabama, in 1851, "Frank Forester" became a regular contributor, and prepared for its columns several unique sporting sketches; among them the above named. "The 'Spirit' and its Editor," and "A Day with the Trout in Lake Incapalio," appeared in the "Gazette" during 1855, and "My First Day's Partridge Shooting," with "The Yorkshire Moors," intended for its columns, appeared after the journal was suspended in Hooper's excellent little work, "Dog and Gun."—EDITOR.

exterior, and rejoiced our interior man with copious libations of hot spiced rum, by such a fire as deponent never saw, save in the pine woods of New Jersey, or in the backwoods of the Penobscot.

Dawn found us at Tom's River, and then, while the rest of the party revelled in gin cocktails, the narrator snoozed luxuriantly in a soft-armed chair until breakfast was on the table, nor—as some of the company averred—fairly awoke then. For it is on record that a portion of the repast—and it was a good one, and justice was done to it—consisting of sausage meat, artfully shaped into flat cakes, fashioned like pork-chops, with segments of bone attached—he, the narrator, Frank, after consuming six and holding out his plate for the seventh, quietly remarked that pork was very tender at Tom's River—no pork being to the fore. Be that as it may, he woke before they reached Barnegat village, at noon, and told and listened to some passably good yarns, during the ride and during the run across the bay to Perrine's Shooter's Paradise—and, as it afterward appeared, a genteel summer watering-place for New Jersey fashion and beauty, during the bathing season,—in a fast-sailing, sloop-rigged sail boat.

The mansion stands on a bleak, barren sand-bank, being the beach between the ocean surf and the famous Bay of Barnegat—not a tree could exist on it, not a brush, not a thistle, nothing but salt rib-grass, mosquitoes, fiddler-crabs and sand-pipers. Yet a fashionable watering-place it is and shall be, as aforesaid, for the brave and fair of the Jerseys. This fact was discovered, and now duly recorded for the first time, by Frank Forester, *thus*: When that worthy, having finished his supper and his pipe, having selected his boatman, the redoubted Jesse Spraggs, seen to his guns and ammunition, filled shot-pouches, powder-horns, provision-baskets and liquor-flasks, as the law directs, was on his way to his dormitory, he observed chalked on the door thereof, in white characters of a foot long, these hieroglyphics:

#### 4 StAGs—

Whereat, being of an enquiring mind, he demanded an explanation of the chamber-boy—for the maid was in this instance represented by a tow-headed, brown-visaged, guernsey-shirted,

fen-booted urchin of thirteen or fourteen years. The intelligent being turned on his heel and pointed to the opposite door, which bore the corresponding inscription :

4 WIMMING FOLKS,—

observed, with an astute grin, "We keeps 'um apart, you see, with seprit bathin' rooms, the gals in here, and the stags in thar."

From which Frank first discovered that in South Jersey all animals of the male sex, quadruped or biped, are promiscuously known as *stags*; and secondly, that in the same literary region, the symbol "4" does not represent, as is elsewhere vainly imagined, the fourth numeral, but the preposition governing the objective case.

He made no reply, but ensconced himself in the bedclothes and slept until three o'clock in the morning, when, after a hurried breakfast, they were off to the bay, in two squads. Lishe T——n and Bill T——r, with two baymen, four Egg Harbor pig-boats, and any given quantity of stools, made tracks for Lovelady's Island, near the outer or upper inlet, and Frank, with his partner, Jesse Spraggs, and Jim Oakley, proceeded further down the bay to the westward, where they ensconced their pig-boxes in a contiguous concave arc, in the slips dug out of the lee side of a sedge bassock, in the following order: To the extreme left, or windward, lay Jim Oakley; next to him Frank's partner; then Frank; and last, not least, to the leeward, the mighty Jesse Spraggs; while without them, at about eighteen yards distance, rode bobbing and ducking at their anchors, as the swell lifted them and now and again broke over them, a whole flock of wild geese—brant, broad-bills, red-heads, black ducks, dippers and the like, deftly carved in wood and balanced with lead, so as to skim the water duck-like.

It was deathly cold, and deathly silent, too, all save the whistle of the wind overhead—for it blew great guns from the northeastward—and an occasional flap of the wild waves against the shore. It was not yet sunrise, although the skies were beginning to put on a paly yellow—and it was dead low water.

Smoking was strictly prohibited, motion no less so—saving to Jesse Spraggs alone, captain and lookout-man at once of the

company. Therefore, as closely as might be under the circumstances, we snuggled ourselves down, each into his own peculiar pig-box, atop of the salt hay which made our beds, and under the drab-colored oiled-cloth and sedge which covered our decks—needful concealment against the keen eyes of the fowl, until the Lord and the turn of the tide should give us luck, and Jesse Spraggs the signal.

To those who know the trick, we speak not, but to those who do not, a word is needed: therefore, in season, it shall be spoken.

The *modus operandi* is this: The boat lies, with the head slightly elevated and inland, stern to the bay and the decoys. In the boat the shooter lies feet to the stern, flat on his back, with his gun handy to his grasp, ready to spring to a sitting posture and let drive so soon as the fowl, coming down before the wind, as the mounting tide overflows their feeding-places, and forces them to change their ground, espy his stools and either hover over them or alight among them. One thing more remains to be stated—when the fowl, skating before the wind, enter the defile, or run, as it might be called, the gauntlet, between a line of boats, stranded as ours were on that morning, and the fleet of decoys, it is absolutely a rule that not a shot must be fired until the headmost bird has crossed the leeward shooter, and he has given the signal for the volley by his opening shot.

On this eventful morning, all the company, except Frank, shot each with a heavy, double-barreled, fourteen-pound, ten-gauged gun. He, with two sixteen-pound single-barrels, of five bore, carrying each a quarter of a pound of BB; wherefore they laughed at him in the beginning—who laughed in the end this history relateth.

Anon, the sky grew amber, roseate, red; the sun rose fiery, the wind rose with him. It grew colder. From time to time the noisy, oft-repeated cry, *ou-ou-otherly, otherly! ou-ou-otherly!* *otherly, otherly, ou-ou!* from a distance, told where a flock of long-tailed ducks, the old wives of the Jersey shore, were at high jinks; but who cares for them?

Once, *cre-aunk-cre-cre-aunk-aunk-cre-e*, a gaggle of brant passed us wild and high, but nought came near our stools. Noon was approaching and not a shot. We ate hard-boiled eggs, we *qualified*, as Jesse calls it—we grew sulky, desperate.

"Down! every mother's son of you," came Jesse's hoarse whisper, "Close't for the lives of you—aunk-aunk-aunk-e-e-aunk!" And far to the windward, out of the clouds, came a faint "*e-e-aunk*" in answer. Nearer and nearer it came still, as Jesse almost rived his throat with the clamor—nearer and quicker, and more evidently responsive.

Now it was like a pack of hounds in full cry—now we could hear the mighty sweep of their circling pinions—and now their crowded phalanx drove into the perilous defile, sweeping right along over our decoys. That morning, like Nelson's crew at Trafalgar, every man did his duty; not a head was raised, not a trigger drawn until the leading gander sailed past Jesse Spraggs, and seemed doubtful whether to circle or alight. "Aunk-aunk-e-aunk!" It was his last honk in this world, for Jesse's concentrated charge struck him under the pinion and he went down at a long tangent, not striking the water within a hundred yards, and then throwing up the spray as if a stone had cleft it. Two geese fell to his second barrel. Then up sprang Frank, and up went his first single-barrel—a flash—a roar! the air was full of feathers and falling geese—five coming down instantly killed, to the shot. Before he got up his second, something the heaviest piece, his partner and Jim Oakley got in three barrels, one of Jim's missing, and three geese told that their light pieces were aimed truly. But now Frank had seized his second, and at the very moment, for confused by the close reports, lots of them wounded, and bothered with their falling kindred, the flock were twirling upward, in a great spiral cloud, like a waterspout—his shot could not but rake them.

Ba-a-ng! and the distant hills re-bellowed to the roar, and Frank, knocked clear out of his pig-box, was landed high and dry on the sand-bank, but little cared he for that; for ere he keeled over, he saw the air filled with birds and a smoke of feathers,

and as he brought up in a sitting posture he heard Jesse's joyous cry—

“By Jehosophat! it snows gooses!” and it did well nigh snow them, indeed; for Frank's two barrels brought down twelve birds, and six more fell to the others. Such was the result of my **BLAZE AT BARNEGAT.**

## *THE AMERICAN BITTERN.*

IN the old days of chivalry and knighthood, when the glory of falconry had not yet faded from earth, like several of his congeners, the heron, especially, and the curlew, which, according to the old rhyme,

“Be she white or be she black,  
Carries twelvepence on her back”—

an enormous price at a time when a sixpence was the value of a fat wether sheep,—the bittern stood high, if not highest, in the estimation both of the epicure and the gentle falconer.

Loud was the cherry whoop, and heartfelt the gratulation, when from some reed-bed in the oozy meadow, beside the silver-winding Trent or royal-towered Thames, flushed by the yelping spaniels, the long-necked hermit fisher would display his broad vans, mottled like the richest tortoise-shell, with bands and wavy lines and variegated blotches of black and chocolate brown, and bright ferruginous and cinereous gray, and yellow ochre; and stretching his long green legs far behind him, soar with his harsh, discordant, clang ing cry, into the empyrean, a worthy quarry for the bravest hawk that ever fleshed his singles in the fowl of game, and one to test his power of wing, his valiant courage, were he the bravest peregrine that ever built his eyrie amid the rocky fastnesses of Hoy, or the best jerfalcon that was ever brought from Norway, to minister to the sports of chivalry and beauty.

Loud was the clank of flagon and of beaker, and prodigal the red wine flowed, when at high noon, where peers and paladins and princes feasted, even at Arthur’s table round, where Lancelo de Lac looked love into the sympathizing eyes of peerless

Guenivere, with heronshaw and peacock, cygnet and venison, the bittern held the place of pride, and valiant knights took on themselves

“Empryzes of great pith and moment,”

and cast their pledges down, plighting their vows before “St. George, the Bittern, and the Ladies.”

But now, like many another first-rate dainty and delicacy, long admired, the bittern, with his congener, the heron—though both still well esteemed by a few wise and judicious *gourmets*—has fallen, for the most part, into disrepute.

In England, toward Christmas-time especially, when, like the snipe and woodcock of that country, the bittern feeds along the penetrable margins of the unfrozen streams and rivulets, which remain open all the winter long, and becomes extremely fat, there is rejoicing when the game-keeper produces, with a grin of triumph, the far-famed “bog-bumper”; and he is incontinently manufactured, with other ingredients known to the wise, into a mighty pasty, manducated by appreciative grinders of purposely invited guests, and washed down by appropriate libations of Beaune or Clos Vougeot.

In America, it is difficult to say wherefore, this fine bird is the object of an absurd and unjust prejudice; it is known generally by an obscene and disgusting appellation; it is shot mercilessly and wantonly by the fowler, if he meets it in the marshes. I say *wantonly*, because with no end or object of utility or reason—and it is then cast away, like the vilest carrion; and the sportsman who has the rare judgment to insist on its being cooked and eaten, like wild fowl, with cayenne pepper, port wine, and lime-juice, is looked upon as a foul-feeder, at least, if not as the variety of the *genus homo* who is supposed habitually to keep a cold clergyman on his sideboard, as a choice dainty, and to luxuriate in the delights of *long-pig*.\*

Bittern shooting can scarcely, as a general rule, be followed as a sport in the United States, for, although the bird, as aforesaid, is common, it is not, generally speaking, numerous; the only

\* Cannibal for human flesh.

exception to this rule being, in so far as I know, the marsh islands in the great south bay of Long Island, where it is extremely abundant.

In these hassocks, as they are often called, it is not easy to shoot them, as they will not readily or willingly take wing, running with great speed in a crouching posture among the long coarse grass, and not exposing any portion of their long lanky forms to the aim of the gunner.

At any high tides, however, when these island meadows are submerged, they may be successfully hunted, in the same manner as the great clapper-rail, or big meadow hen, by means of boats pulled or, in very shoal water, shoved with pushing poles over the flats. Before these they cannot avoid rising, and as they do so, heavily, with a slow and laborious flapping, they present an easy and obvious mark, even to tyros; and by good marksmen are certainly slaughtered with No. 4 or 5 shot, from an ordinary fowling-piece. At the *Riviere aux Canards*, in Upper Canada, or the Newark Salt Meadows, and in the marshes along the margins of the Hackensac river, as also, in former times, at the English neighborhood, I have occasionally had good sport with these great aquatic birds, while in pursuit of English snipe; but it would scarcely pay, even in these favored localities, to go out especially bittern-shooting. They will lie well to setters, which are used to point them steadily, and springers give tongue to them keenly, and flush them with ardor; these two facts marking them as legitimately *game*.

The bittern is a very beautiful bird, about twenty-seven inches in length, by three feet four inches in extent from tip of wing to wing; its upper parts are beautifully mottled and variegated, like the finest tortoise-shell; its under parts are of a pale, ochreous yellow, streaked, especially on the long feathers in the front of the neck, with longitudinal black lines. It has a pendulous crest, on the nape of the neck, which, when wounded or irritated, it erects fiercely; its eyes are of a clear, fierce golden hue, almost as bright and dauntless as those of the eagle; its legs are yellowish green; the toes armed with long pectinated claws, which our ancestors, in their wisdom, were wont to carry, when they could get them, in their waistcoat pockets, as a specific and antidote

against rheumatism, when shooting in the aguish marshes which he affects as his local habitation and his home.

On the whole, he is the handsomest and noblest of the aquatic waders, if we except the lovely snow-white egret, and the yet more beautiful and rarer scarlet ibis, of the south; and is as bold and brave as he is succulent and savory when fat and smoking on the board. Hence I invariably shoot him when I can; and never pick him up, till I am well assured he "has shuffled off his mortal coil"; for he will fight to the last against man, dog, or devil; and his beak is both sharp and strong, and strikes like a Moorish assagay at the eye of the assailant. Hence I avoid him. *Verbum sap.*

# THE DEATH OF THE STAG;

OR,

## THE TALBOTS IN TEVIOTDALE.

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The stag at eve had drunk his fill,  
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,  
And deep his midnight lair had made  
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;  
But when the sun his beacon red  
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,  
The blood-hound's deep resounding bay  
Came swelling up the rocky way.

—LADY OF THE LAKE.

### “TAYHO! Tayho!”\*

And straightway to the cry responded the long-drawn mellow notes of the huge French horns which were in those days used by every yoeman pricker, as the peculiar and time-honored instrument of the stag-hunt, the *mots* of which were as familiar to every hunter's ear as so many spoken words of his vernacular.

It was the gray dawn of a lovely summer morning in the latter part of July, and although the moorcocks were crowing sharp and shrill from every rocky knoll or purple eminence of the wild moors, now waving far and wide with the redolent luxuriance of their amethyst garniture, for the heather was in its full

\*“Tayho” is the technical hunting halloo when a stag has broken cover, as is “Talliho!” the corresponding cry for the fox. Both words are corruptions from the French “*Taillis Hors!*” “Out of the thicket.” French being used to a very late day as the especial language of the chase.

flush of bloom; although the thrush and black-birds were caroling in emulous joy, at the very top of their voices, from every brake and thicket which feathered the wild banks of the hill-burns, the sun had not lifted a portion of his disc above the huge, round-topped fells which formed the horizon to the north and westward of my scene. That scene was the slope of a long hill—

“A gentle hill,  
Green and of mild declivity—the last,  
As 't were the cape of a long ridge of such,  
Save that there was no sea to lave its base,  
But a most living landscape, and the wave  
Of woods and corn-fields, and the abodes of men  
Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke  
Arising from such rustic roofs.”

The hills above and somewhat farther off to the southward and eastward, are clothed and crowned with oak woods of magnificence and size so unusual, and kept with such marked evidences of care and culture that no one could doubt, even if it were not proved by the gray turrets of an old baronial manor and the spire of a tall clock-house shooting up high over the tops of the forest giants, that they were the appendages and ornaments of some one of those ancient homes of England, which, full of elegancies and graces of the present, remind us so pleasantly of the ruder, though not less homely, hospitalities of the past.

The immediate summit of the slope I have mentioned is bare, yet conspicuous for a single tree, the only one of its kind existing for many miles in that district—a single white pine, tall enough for the mast of some huge admiral, and as such visible, it is said, from points in the four northern provinces of England, and the two southernmost of Scotland—whence it is known far and wide, in many a border lay and legend, as the one-tree hill on Reedswood.\* Below the low brow of this inland promontory, for such indeed it is, which is covered with beautiful, short, mossy grass, as firm and soft as the greensward of a modern race-course, and used as one vast pasture of two hundred acres, lies a vast tract of coppice, principally of oak and birch, but interspersed with

\*In Northumberland, a few miles from the Scottish border

expanses of waving heather, where the soil is too shallow to support a larger growth, and dotted here and there with bold, gray crags which have cropped out above the surface, and amongst these, few and far between, some glorious old, gnarled hawthorns, which may well have furnished May-wreaths to the yellow-haired daughters of the Saxon before the mailed foot of the imperious Norman had dinted the green turf of England. This coppice overspread the whole declivity and base of the hill, until it melted into the broad, rich meadows, which, with a few scattered woods of small size, and here and there a patch of yellow wheat, or a fragrant bean-field, filled all the bottom of the great strath or valley, down to the banks of a large stream, beyond which the land rose steeply, first in rough moorland pastures, divided by dry stone walls, then in round, heathery swells, then in great broad-backed purple fells, and beyond all, faintly traceable in the blue haze of distance, in the vast ridges of the Cheviots and the hills of Tevydale. Along the base of the hill-side, parting it from the meadows, ran a tall, oak park-paling, made of rudely-split planks, not anywhere less than five feet in height, through which access was given to the valley by heavy gates of the same material, from two or three winding wood-roads into the shadowy lanes of the lovely lower country.

Such was the scene, o'er which there arose before the sun, startling the hill echoes far and near, and silencing the grouse-cocks on the moors, and the song-birds in the brake and thicket by their tumultuous din, the shouts and fanfares that told the hunt was up.

“Tayho! Tayho!”

Tara-tara-tara-tantara-ra-taratantara-tantara-ra-ra-rah. Which being interpreted into verbal dog-talk, is conceived to say—“Gone away! gone away! gone away! away! away! away!” and is immediately understood as such, not by the well-mounted sportsman only, but by what Scott calls, himself no unskilled woodsman, “the dauntless trackers of the deer,” who rush full-mouthed to the cheery clangor, filling all earth and ether with the musical discords of their sweet chidings.

The spot whence the first loud, manly shout “Tayho” resounded, was almost within the shadow of the one tree,

where, as from a station commanding the whole view of the covert, which a powerful pack of the famous Talbot blood-hounds, numbering not less than forty couple, were in the act of drawing, a gay group was collected, gallantly appareled, gallantly mounted, and all intent, like the noble steeds they bestrode, eyes, ears and souls erect, on the gallant sport of the day.

Those were the days of broad-leaved hats and floating plumes, of velvet justaucorps, rich on the seams with embroideries of gold and silver, of the martial jack-boot and the knightly spur on the heel, and the knightly sword on the thigh, and thus were our bold foresters accoutered for such a chase as is never heard tell of in these times of racing hounds and flying thoroughbreds, when the life of a fox is counted by the minutes he can live with a breast-high scent before the flyers, and the value of a hunter by the seconds he can go in the first flight with a dozen horseman's stone upon his back.

Things then were otherwise; the fox was unkenneled, or the stag unharbored at daybreak, and killed, if the scent lay well, sooner or later, before sunset—runs were reckoned by hours, hounds picked for their staunchness, not their fleetness, horses bought not for their speed, but for their stoutness, and the longest, steadiest last rider, not the most daring or the foremost, won the palm of the chase, were it brush or antler, when the game fox was run into, or the gallant stag turned to bay.

The gentlemen who were gathered on the broad, bare brow of the one-tree hill were in all twelve or thirteen in number, all, at first sight, men of gentle blood and generous education, although as there ever is, ever must be in every company, whether of man or inferior animals, there was one to whom every eye, even of the unknown stranger or the ignorant peasant, would have naturally turned as evidently and undoubtedly the superior of the party, both in birth and breeding; he mingled nevertheless with the rest on the most perfect terms not of equality only, but of intimate familiar intercourse and friendship. No terms of ceremonial, no titles of rank or territorial influence, but simple Christian names passed between those gay and joyous youths; nor was there anything in the habit of the wearers, or the mounting of the riders, to indicate the slightest difference in

their positions of social well-being and well-doing. One youth, however, who answered to the name of Gerald, and sometimes to the patrimonial Howard, was so far the handsomer both in form and feature, the statelier in stature, the gracefuller in gesture, the manlier in bearing, the firmer and easier of seat and hand on his hunter, that any one would have been prompt to say almost at a glance, there is the man of all this gentle and generous group, whom, if war wakes its clangor in the land, if external perils threaten its coasts, or internal trouble shake its state, foreign wars or domestic strife will alike find the foremost, whether in his seat with the senate, or in his saddle on the field, wielding with equal force and skill the statesman's, scholar's, soldier's eye, tongue, sword—all honored him, indeed, and he deserved that all should honor him.

I have omitted, not forgotten or neglected, to mention as first and fairest of that fair company, a bevy of half a dozen fair and graceful girls—not like the gentlemen, all of one cast, but as was evident, not so much from the difference of their grace and beauty—though in these also there was a difference—as from the relative difference of positions which they maintained, four remaining somewhat in the rear of the other two, and not mingling unless first addressed in the conversation, and from some distinction in the costliness and material of their attire.

A mounted chamberlain, with four or five grooms, who stood still farther aloof, in the rear of the ladies in waiting, and two or three glittering pages standing a-foot among the latter, in full tide of gallantry and flirtation, their coursers held by the grooms in attendance, made up the party. From which must always be excepted the huntsman, the verdurer, and eight or ten yeomen prickers, in laced green jerkins, with round velvet caps, like those worn by the whippers-in of the present day, and huge French-horns over their left shoulders, who were seen from time to time appearing, disappearing, and reappearing in the glades and dingles of the hill-side covert, and heard now rating the untimely and fallacious challenge of some wayward and willful puppy, now cheering the earnest and trusty whipper of some redoubted veteran of the pack, as he half-opened on a scent of yester-even.

The hounds had been in the coppice above an hour, and two-

thirds of its length had already been drawn blank—the gentlemen were beginning to exchange anxious and wistful glances, and two or three had already consulted more than once or twice their ponderous, old-fashioned repeaters—and now the elder, shorter and fairer of the two damsels, giving the whip lightly to her chestnut palfry, cantered up to the side of Gerald Howard, followed by her companion, whose dark redundancy of half-disheveled nut-brown tresses fell down from beneath a velvet cap, with a long drooping plume, on each side of a face of the most exquisite oval, with a high brow, long, jet-black eyelashes, showing in the cold relief against her pure, colorless cheeks, for her eyes were downcast, and an expression of the highest intellect, which is ever found in woman mingled with all a woman's tenderness and softness. She was something above the middle height, with a figure of rare symmetry, exquisitely rounded, and sat her horse at once most femininely and most firmly, without the least indication of manliness in her seat or demeanor, yet with a certain air of at-home-ness in her position and posture, that showed she could ride as well, perhaps as boldly, as the best man among them.

“Ah! Gerald, Gerald,” said the elder girl, laughingly, as she tapped him on the arm with the silver butt of her riding whip, “is this your faith to fair ladies, and especially to this fairest Kate, that you deluded us from our soft beds, at this untimely hour, with promises to unharbor us a stag of ten within so many minutes, all for the pleasure of our eyes, and the delectation of our hearts; and here have we been sitting on this lone hill-side two hours and upwards, to the great craving of our appetites, and the faintness of our hearts, yearning—as the queen’s good puritans would have it—after creature comfort. Out on you! out on you for a false knight, as I believe not, for my part, that there is one horn or hoof from the east to the west on the hill-side—no, not from the ‘throstle’s nest’ to the ‘thorny brae.’”

“Ah! sister mine, art so incredulous—but I will wager you or ere the Talbots reach that great gray stone, with the birch boughs moving over it like the plumes, as our bright Kate would say, of a dead warrior’s helmet over his cold brow, we *will* have a stag a-foot, ay, and a stag of ten.” And instantly raising his

voice to a quicker and clearer note—"see now!" he cried, "see now!" as a superb, dark colored animal, not lower than a yearling colt at the forehand, leaped with a bound as agile as if he was aided by wings, on the cope-stone of the dry stone wall, which bounded the hither side of the hill coppice, with vast, branching antlers tossed as if in defiance, and a swan-like neck swollen with pride and anger. He stood there an instant, self-poised, self-balanced, "like the herald Mercury new lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,"—uttered a hoarse, bellowing cry, peculiar to the animal in his season, and then sailing forth in a long, easy curve, alighted on the springy turf, whose enameled surface he scarce dinted, and then swept up the gentle slope almost toward the admiring group on the brow, but in a diagonally curved line that would carry him in the long run to the south-west of them, at the distance of perhaps a hundred yards.

"Tayho! Tayho!" burst in a clear and hearty shout from the excited lips of Gerald Howard. And instantly from every part of the hill-side, from the 'throstle's nest' to the 'thorny brae,' from ten well-blown French horns burst the wild call. "Tara-tara-tara-tantara-ra-tara-tantara-tantara-ra-ra-rah—Gone away—gone away—gone away—away—away!" and the fierce rally of the mighty Talbots broke into tongue at once through the whole breadth and length of the oak coppice, as they came pouring up the hills, making the heather bend and the coppice crash before them like those famed Spartan hounds of Hercules and Cadmus,

At fifty separate spots they leaped the wall nearly abreast, but four were in may be a spear's length the leaders, and they laying their heads right at the noble quarry, which was still full in view, came straining up the hill, making all ring around them with their deep-mouthed thunder. The rest topped the wall one by one, in view too, and on a breast-high scent caine steaming up the

rich grass slope on converging lines, so that as they passed the attentive group to the westward, within a hundred yards, the pack had got all together within, perhaps, another hundred yards of his haunches, running so that a large carpet might have covered the whole forty couple, and raving with such a din of harmonious discords, such shrill and savage trebles of the fierce bitch hounds, such a deep diapasone of the old veteran dogs, such sweet and attuned chidings of the whole, that not an ear but must have listened with delight, not a heart but must have bounded with rapture at the exulting sounds.

And ever and anon there rang up from the wildwood the deep, mellow blasts of the French horns, blent with the jangled cries of Talbots into a strange and indescribable clangor and crepitation, at once most peculiar and most entrancing.

At the same moment the sun burst into view above the eastern hills, and pouring down a great flood of golden lustre over the whole glowing scene, kindled up everything into life and light—tinging with ruddy light the dappled sides of the noble beast as he swept by them, now within fifty yards—for he had circled around them, wantoning and bounding to and fro, perfectly unconcerned by the nearer presence of his pursuers and seemingly desirous to display the miracles of his speed and beauty to the fair eyes that admired him—enlivening the dappled hides of the many-colored, glossy pack—burnishing the sleek and satin coats of the noble coursers, till they glowed with almost metallic splendor—flashing upon the rich laces, the bright buckles and the polished sword-hilts of the hunters, and gilding the bridle-bits and brazen horns of the verdurers and yoemen prickers, until the whole hill-side was glittering with a thousand gay hues and salient lights, filling the mind with memories of fairy-land and magic marvels.

Hitherto the little group on the brow of the one-tree hill had stood motionless, while the gay, animated scene had revolved around them, a glittering circle wheeling around the stationary centre; but now, when the servants of the chase, huntsmen and verdurers, prickers and all, streamed up the long hill at their best pace, all wheeled around the tree and its gay company, swelling the din with the flare and braying of their horns, the gallant stag

appeared to comprehend that a fresh band of enemies were added to his first pursuers—for he half turned his head to gaze on them, half paused for a moment to snuff the air, with nostrils pridefully dilated and flanks heaving, not with weariness as yet, but with contempt and scorn, then with a toss of his antlers, and a loud snort of indignation, set his head fair to the northwest, full for the hills of Scotland, and went away at long, sweeping bounds that seemed to divide the green slope, by leaps of eight yards each, soared back again over the rough stone wall, and went crashing through the thickets, straight for the tall oak palings and the river, as if he were bound for some distant well-known point, on a right line as the crow flies.

And now for the gentlemen the chase was begun, and Gerald Howard led it, like their leader as he was in all things, and the rest followed him like men as they were, and brave ones—but to the ladies it was ended so soon as they had breathed their palfries down the slope to the stone wall and the woodside at an easy canter; and they returned to the hill-top, where they found viands and refreshments spread on the grass; and long they lingered there watching the hunt recede, and the sounds of the chase die away in the far distance. But it was long ere the sights and sounds were lost all and wholly to their eyes and ears—for the quarry still drove on, as straight as the crow flies, due northward—due northward the chase followed.

They saw the gallant stag swoop over the oak-pales as if they were no obstacle—they saw the yelping pack crash and climb after him; then they saw Gerald Howard on his tall coal-black barbe soar over it unhindered—but all the rest turned right or left to gate or gap, or ere they might follow him. The valley was crossed as by a whirlwind—the river swam by hart, hound, and hunter, unhesitating and unheeding—and far beyond up the green moorland pasture, over the stone-walls, now disappearing over the hill-tops into the misty hollows, now glinting up again into the light over some yet more distant stretch of purple heath; and still the chiding of the hounds, and still the wild bursts of the French-horns fell faintly on the ears, as the wind freshened from the westward—but at length sound and sight failed them, and when silence had sunk still and solitude reigned almost

perfect over the late peopled slope of thorny brae and the one-tree hill, the gay bevy of dames and damsels returned homeward, something the more serious if not the sadder for the parting, to await the gathering of their partners to the gay evening meal.

Long they waited—late it grew—the evening meal was over—the close of night had come—the lights in the bower and hall were kindled—the gates were locked and barred—long ere the first of the belated foresters returned soiled and splashed, way-worn and weary, with the jaded and harassed hounds, and horses almost dead from the exertion and exhaustion of the day. At midnight, of the field all the men save one were collected, though two or three came in on foot, and yet more on borrowed horses—their own good steeds left in the morass or on the moorland, to feed the kites and the hill-foxes—of the pack all save two mustered at the kennel-gates in such plight as the toil they had borne permitted.

The man missing was Sir Gerald Howard, the master of the pack, the two hounds were its two leaders, Hercules and Hard-heart, of whom no rider had ever yet seen the speed slacken or the heart fail.

The old verdurer, who gave out the last, reported Gerald Howard going well, when he saw him last, with the stag and two Talbots of all in full view—and this many miles into Scotland within the pleasant vale of Teviotdale, with the great Scottish hills, grim and gray, towering up before him, and the night closing fast on those dim solitudes.

It was late on the next day when Sir Gerald Howard was seen riding up the road on the same steed he had backed so gallantly, still weary and worn, though recruiting—with the huge antlers at his saddle-bow, but no brave Talbots at his heel.

He had ridden far into the darkness, still guided by the baying of the staunch hounds; and when he could see to ride no longer, had obtained timely succor and refreshment from a stout borderer of Teviot-side. At daylight mounted a fresh horse, a garron of the country, to renew the chase; but it was now soon ended. Scarce had he gone a mile on the straight line they had run throughout, ere he found Hard-heart stiff and cold on the mountain heather, and not a hundred yards yet onward, ere the great

stag lay before him, not a hair of his hide injured, and Hercules beside him, with his head upon his haunches, where he had breathed his last, powerless to bleed the brave quarry he had so nobly conquered.

Sixty miles had they run on that summer's day from point; they had died together, and in their graves they were not confounded, for a double tomb was scooped in the corrie or hollow of the mountain-side, wherein they were found, and above it was piled a rough, gray column, whereupon may be seen rudely sculptured this true epitaph,

Hercules killed Hart O'Grease,  
And Hart O'Grease killed Hercules.

For, reader mine, this is a real and true tale, and I, who tell it you, have sat upon the stone, and tempered my cup of Farintosh from the little rill beside it, with the wild peak of the Maiden's Pass before me, the dark Cheviots at my right, the blue heights of the Great Moor looming away almost immeasurably to the westward, and no companions near me save the red grouse of the heather, and the curlew of the morass, nothing to while away the time that my weary setters slept in the noonday sun, save this old-time tradition.

## *THE RED FOX.*

THIS well-known and widely distributed animal is one of the few species, whether of birds or quadrupeds, that is not peculiar to this continent, but co-exists, identical in all its characteristics, in Europe and America.

It is not, indeed, a fact perfectly established that the red fox is originally indigenous to this country; it being well ascertained that it was largely imported, as a beast of chase, by the founders of the Cavalier settlements of Maryland, shortly after their arrival, in order to minister to their sporting propensities, for which purposes its craft, courage and endurance adapt it far more than its congener, the gray fox, which is peculiar to the western hemisphere.

This circumstance, together with the fact that the red fox of America is not to be distinguished, in any structural points, from the European animal, has induced the belief among many well-informed persons, that the red fox was unknown in America before the arrival of the white man, and that the whole race with which the continent, in its northern portions especially, abounds, are all descendants of those imported by the settlers of Lord Baltimore, such as were fortunate enough to escape the fox-hounds of the gallant cavaliers.

Without asserting positively that this derivation is true, it may be well to state that it is by no means, as some persons have maintained, impossible; since, notwithstanding the vast increase, in a comparatively short period, which must be assumed in order to account for the wide diffusion of the race at the present day, such an increase is by no means inconsistent with the laws of nature as regards the propagation of animals, where they are entirely, or in a great degree, unmolested.

It is, moreover, worthy of remark, in this point of view, that the red fox, though in no respect domesticated, or, perhaps, susceptible of domestication, is yet the attendant and concomitant of man, extending his range as the range of civilization is extended, and rarely, if ever, occurring in the interior of the native wilderness.

The English rabbit has in this manner become indigenous to parts of Florida, where, I am informed, they are now abundant, of all colors, being sprung from a few pairs of the domesticated variety; while it is notorious that the countless droves of cattle and wild horses which people the pampas of South America are sprung from individuals turned loose by the Spaniards, and that many uninhabited islands in the Pacific and elsewhere actually swarm with European animals, the descendants of single pairs set ashore by beneficent mariners for the benefit of humanity at large.

The limits inhabited by the red fox of America are, as I have stated above, very widely extended, embracing all the settled parts of the United States, but more especially the central portions along the sea-board, and to the eastward. In Florida and farther south they are far rarer. The red fox is thus described in Dekay's *Fauna of the State of New York*:-

“ *Characteristics.*—Reddish above, whitish beneath. Ears behind, and anterior part of legs, varying from light brown to deep black. Length, 3—4 feet.

“ *Description.*—From a large male killed in Queen's county, Long Island, New York.—Snout, small and pointed. Length of head, 7.0.

“ *Color.*—Anterior part of the head, the flanks, and back, bright reddish, more particularly along the back and foreshoulders, where the color is more intense. Margin of the chin and upper jaw, pure white. Throat, breast and a narrow space along the belly, whitish, mixed with brown on the latter. Fore and hind feet black in front, the black on the latter extending up on the outside of the thigh. Toes margined with fulvous. Brush, ample, reddish, composed of two sorts of hairs, the one

black at the base and reddish at the tips; the other, much longer, entirely black, giving to the whole tail a dusky appearance.

Head and body, . . . . .	29.0
Vertebræ of tail, . . . . .	12.0
Ditto tips of hairs, . . . . .	16.0

" The red fox varies considerably in weight and size; the specimen above described weighing eleven pounds; and I have heard of others weighing fifteen pounds, but such are not common; the more usual weight is from eight to ten pounds. Although this fox burrows well, yet it is not uncommon to find them taking possession of the burrows of the skunk for the purpose of rearing their young. Richardson states that it burrows in summer, and in winter takes refuge under a fallen tree. It brings forth from four to six young, about the latter end of March or first of April, in the state of New York. These are at first covered with a smoke-brown fur. In a litter I once saw the tips of the tails in all were white, and, like the dog, were blind for some days after birth. They feed on the smaller quadrupeds and birds, and are accused of destroying lambs. They make occasional forays upon the barn-yard, but in this respect are not so daring as the other species, and, perhaps, in some measure compensate for their injuries by destroying field-mice and other noxious vermin. Its flesh is rank and disagreeable. It is to this species we refer two strongly marked varieties, which have by some naturalists been treated as species:

" 1. *The Cross Fox—Decussatus.*—The color of the preceding, with a dark stripe on the neck from the head to the back, crossed at right angles by another dark stripe over the shoulders. This cross is sometimes only feebly distinct, and at others well defined. It has the size, form, habits and fur of the red fox, and is always considered by the hunters as a variety. The caprice of fashion has attached a great value to this skin. While the red fox skin is valued at about two dollars, the cross fox has been known to sell for twelve, and sometimes as high as fifteen dollars. It occurs in every part of the state, but more particularly in the northern districts.

"2. *The Black Fox*.—Godman, vol. I., p. 274, pl. fig. 1—Almost entirely black; the end of the tail and spots on the breast occasionally white, sometimes intensely hoary. This is very rare in this state. I have never met with it, but have been assured by hunters in the northern counties that they have sometimes killed it. Richardson, page 94, asserts that its fur fetches six times the price of any other produced in North America. Its value, doubtless, increases with the intensity and purity of the black color."

It is the existence of these two varieties only—for it appears to be conceded by all the best naturalists, that there are no specific distinctions between the red, cross, and black foxes—that inclines me to the belief that the American and English, or European red fox is not identical; since no such varieties are to be found in the other hemisphere, as might be expected, were we to regard them as mere freaks of nature.

The fox is proverbially cunning, both in his predatory movements, and in the instinct of preservation, which prompts him to stratagems, when closely pursued by hounds and hunters, so sagacious as to baffle the scenting qualities of the finest dogs, and to outwit man's penetration.

He is bold, hardy, and indefatigable, whether in pursuit of game, or in escaping from his enemies. In the latter category I have myself been in the field more than once, when a celebrated and well-known fox, easily distinguished by the loss of a portion of his brush, amputated in a steel trap, has stood before a good pack of hounds from ten o'clock in the morning until it became too dark to continue the chase, across an open country, without wood or coppice, covering about forty miles of distance during that time, and thoroughly tiring out every horse in the field.

It was my fortune to be present at the last run afforded by this gallant fox, and to assist—as the French call it—at his death. On being found, he took his usual line from the covert which he haunted, due westward across a fine grazing country, consisting for the most part of forty and fifty-acre pasture-fields, inclosed by dry stone walls, from four-and-a-half to six feet in height. There had been a warm rain over night, but not enough to

render the country deep or heavy; and a strong but mild west wind was blowing directly in the teeth of the fox; circumstances the most favorable that can be conceived to the hounds, and *vice versa* to the quarry—since the same gale which impedes his progress conveys his effluvium fresh and reeking to the olfactory organs of his pursuers, lending them redoubled stimulus of speed and vigor.

Consequently, in many years of fox-hunting, I never saw hounds run so fast as they did on that morning, topping the walls, ten or twelve a breast, and unable to give tongue, beyond an occasional whimper, owing to the tremendous pace they were going.

Thirteen miles were done in one hour and seven minutes, before the gallant fox was run into, without a check, a turn, or a double, in the whole line, in the middle of a large grass field; only five horses, out of the seventy or more which started from the covert side, being on the spot when the who-whoop was given—all the remainder had come to a stand still, some farther, some nearer, along the entire course of country traversed, and not a few were rendered entirely useless by the exertions of the day.

This is one of the most remarkable runs with fox-hounds on record, so far as speed is concerned; twelve miles an hour being considered the utmost rate of speed attainable, even for short distances, by either hounds or horses, across an inclosed country; and the maintenance of that pace for thirteen consecutive miles being a circumstance almost unparalleled in the annals of sporting. The fences were, moreover, unusually severe, as, being of solid stone, they afforded the hounds no opportunity of passing through, or *mensing* them, as it is technically termed, but compelled them to scramble over their tops, as it did the horses to take them in their strides.

The introduction of finely bred and fleet hounds, and of thorough-bred horses, instead of the slow, staunch old Southern breed of dogs, and the short-barreled, punchy, half-bred hunters of the last century, has effected as complete a revolution in the style of English fox-hunting, as the introduction of steam has done with the system of travel.

Instead of meeting in the gray of a chill November morning before the sun has risen, the modern Nimrods muster at the covert-side at half-past ten or eleven o'clock; and, if the scent be good and the sport in proportion, the day is over by two or three, and both hounds and horses have an ample sufficiency of work, and the riders of excitement, in the death of a brace of flying foxes, in a couple of sharp, short and decisive bursts, with a kill at the end, each of forty minutes' to an hour's duration. While in the days of old, six or seven hours' slow tracking and trailing, by which the fox was fairly wearied and worn out, and badgered to death, was the order of the day. The length of time occupied was then the test of a good run; staunchness and endurance the crowning praise of a pack; and the prize of sportsmanship belonged to the man who, after trotting about lanes and by-ways, nicking the turns of the chase, and cutting off corners, without perhaps crossing one field in company with the hounds, or leaping a single fence, came in at the death after all.

The number of miles run in a minimum of time, a burst without a check, and a kill in the open, are now the grand desiderata; extreme fleetness, superadded to high scenting qualities, is the chief merit of hounds; and the best rider is he who *lives*, as it is gnostically termed, from the beginning to the end of the run, in the same field with the pack, riding nearly abreast, and taking every fence in his stroke, as it occurs, without craning or faltering.

In the northern and eastern states of this country, fox-hunting is not pursued generally as a sport, but rather as a method of destroying a noxious animal, and the gun is for the most part called in aid of a brace or two of slow, old-fashioned southern hounds.

In the southern states, however, Maryland, Virginia, both the Carolinas and Georgia, fox-hunting is pursued with much eagerness and delight, if with less system and accuracy of appointment, as in England.

Many regular packs of hounds are kept by individual gentlemen in these states, and scarcely any planter is without his well-blooded hunter whereon to join the chase.

In the less thickly settled states of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi, the favorite sport is deer-hunting; and in

any of these it is scarcely possible to travel a day's ride, without hearing the jocund chorus of the hounds, and the merry shout of the hunter reechoing through the forest.

A yet more general method is the formation of subscription packs, each gentleman in a neighborhood keeping two or more couple of hounds at walk, which readily rally to the bugle blown at head-quarters on hunting mornings; and, in the wild woodland counties, which constitute the greater surface of the hunting grounds, do their work as satisfactorily as more regularly constituted packs, where, from the nature of the land, equality of speed, size and symmetry are less needful—since it is rare that hounds can run abreast—than in the clear and cultivated champaigns of old England.

To this cause, moreover, it is to be ascribed, that here, as in England of the olden day, staunchness and endurance are qualities more demanded than extreme speed; for the character of the country and nature of the soil gives the fox every opportunity of dogging, running his own back-trail, and otherwise baffling the hounds, while the great extent of woodlands, and the extraordinary severity of the dense, tangled, and thorny coverts, prevent the sportsmen from riding up to the hounds, and make it necessary for them to follow often by hearing rather than by view.

Of all sports there is none so fascinating, none so madly exciting, as fox-hunting, with a full cry of hounds making the sere woods crash with the melody of their woodland chorus—hounds, horses, men alike rejoicing and exulting in the hot chase, and the full development it calls into existence of their power and pride. Long life to it wherever it exists, and health and happiness to all who honor it!

## *A TRIP TO CHATEAU RICHER;*

OR,

## *SNIPE SHOOTING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE.*

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THE time had arrived when, as must be the case with the best friends, Harry and I were doomed to part, though but for a brief season—the special aim and object of my trip across the broad Atlantic (being no other than to see America in all its length and breadth), though long delayed at Harry's strong solicitation, and the magnificent sport I had enjoyed under his auspices on the broad marshes of New Jersey, and in the devious woodlands of fair Warwick, was now to be accomplished—and one cold winter's afternoon I stepped on board the steamboat Mohican, for Stonington and Boston, whence I intended to visit in detail the eastern portion of the New England states; and crossing by the gorges of the Kennebec, to pass the spring and summer in the rich provinces of Canada. It was my firm intent on leaving my friend's hospitable roof, to have gone quite up to Aroostook, and taken there a snow-shoe tramp after the moose and cariboo. But many causes fell out to the prevention of my plan, not the least of which was the exceeding mildness of the winter, and consequent want of snow sufficiently deep to render the sport either profitable or exciting. The cold months of this year were therefore passed in absolute inaction, at least as regards field sports. The double gun and Yager rifle which honest Timothy had with his own hands packed in double cases, duly secured by painted sail-cloth covers, saw not the light of day! The brace of clean-limbed, active setters (which, after much debate and consultation, I had at length picked up—my choice

sanctioned by Harry's most oracular approbation—one from that paragon of breakers, Mike Sanford—second of that name renowned throughout New Jersey—the other from his English rival, Dilke—truly, though differing in their methods, both Arcadians), had no more glorious exercise than trotting many a weary mile behind the well-horsed mails of the New England states, without which pleasurable interruptions to their hyernal slumbers, they would undoubtedly have rivalled Falstaff or Fat Tom in magnitude, before the breaking up of winter. Though undiversified by my beloved field-sports, the winter wore away, however—and that, be it said, not tediously—the tardy spring, less tardy in this instance than its wont, did break; and on the fourteenth day of April I started on my route toward the ever-memorable Heights of Abraham—the same route, too, by which the then renowned and gallant Arnold led his detachment of backwoodsmen into a hostile country. Greatly had I been misinformed concerning that same road, for beautiful although it be—yea! beautiful exceedingly—running along the wild and wooded gorge of the broad, bright Kennebec, up to its junction with Dead river, I must say, that as a road it is most execrable. Though barely eighty miles from my starting post, it occupied me two full days to reach the forks of the Kennebec—thence I advanced another day, forty miles further through pine forests, over mountain heights, skirting fair wood-embosomed lakes, dragged in a sleigh actually

Through bush, through briar,  
Through mud, through mire,

to the Lines, where, in a miserable hovel, I was constrained to linger six-and-thirty most immortal hours, with no food save sour bread and smoked fish stewed in rancid oil, till horses should arrive to take me onward from St. Francis. And when they did arrive, heavens! what a cortege. We proceeded. No less than three *charrettes*, or small two-wheeled Canadian carts, dragged by three lamentable carcasses, at which the *hungriest* pack of hounds on earth would have turned up their noses, conveyed me and my baggage twelve miles in six hours to the mail-house. There, thanks to the kind foresight of a friend in Quebec, I was met by a capital relay of fleet, strong horses, with a good saddle-horse

for myself, furnished by Mr. Colway—the prince of postmasters—who having settled many years ago at the then desolate St. Joseph's, has now long reaped the fruits of his industrious energy—a happy home, a thriving farm, the good-will and respect of all around him; and, more than all, the grateful love of the French *habitants*, who look up to their *Monsieur Jem* with feelings nigh akin to the old feudal loyalty, better deserved, too, by the kind-hearted, sturdy and frank Englishman, than by the courtliest Frank that ever owned a seigneury. Heavens! how delicious seemed that smoking sirloin which graced his hospitable board; plum pudding, too, for it was Easter Monday; and a ripe Cheshire cheese, with no contemptible commodity of old Jamaica to hold these solids in solution. Dinner concluded, my good host informed me that canoes were ready; for lo! the great Chaudiere, adown whose broad and cultured vale I had for some miles past been journeying, swollen by the unusually early thaw, had laid the whole road under water. The wind was fresh and cold, and dead against us, and I was glad to wrap my box coat close about me, to pull my fur cap over my shivering ears, and to crouch down beside the dogs in the boat's bottom. Anon a dense snow-squall came on, hiding the banks on either hand, and pelting us unmercifully with its sharp, sleety arrows; still, with their measured chant, timed to the dip of their sturdy paddles, the boatmen plied their arms; and the sun had not yet sunk behind the western hills, when gladly I quaffed in the clean, comfortable tavern at St. Mary's, a jorum of hot brandy toddy, and speedily thereafter turned into a sweet, well-aired bed, the first I had slept in for many a night, which weariness alone had rendered wakeless. On the next morning bright were we up and early, and yet so bad was the high road, the snow lying thereon in places five feet deep, with ruts cut down quite to the level of the soil, that though but thirty miles of distance, it was five hours after noon before I reached Point Levi, and saw the battled heights of that superb Cape Diamond, which years will not efface from my remembrance, towering above the mist which shrouded the irregular gables, the narrow streets, and busy quays of the lower town, with the gigantic flood of the St. Lawrence, turbid and vexed by isles of floating ice, wheeling in solemn majesty beneath

it. Once arrived at the hospitable mansion of my friend, the cheerful fireside, and hearty welcome, the genuine old English comforts unseen for many a day, but unforgotten, effaced all recollections in a twinkling of the fatigues and disagreements of a spring journey by the Kennebec, which has become now—tedious as it was at the time, and toilsome—one of the many, many passages in life concerning which we feel the deep truth and philosophy of the sweet Mantuan's sentiment,

Olim et hac meminasse juvabit.

Where all was new and beautiful and famous—and oh, how wonderfully beautiful are all the environs of that American Gibraltar—it must not be imagined that my thoughts turned instantly toward field-sports. Many delightful days were given to society, many to visiting the mighty—a thousand times more mighty than I had fancied them—fortifications of the strong Hill Town—the citadel, with its unrivalled panoramic view—the plains of Abraham, rich with the memories of those whose names are history—and all the sublime scenery around them. But anon, when, as it were in the twinkling of an eye, the snow which lay so deep when I arrived in every vale and hollow, vanished as if by magic; when the trees, which not three days before had been bare and dry and sapless, burst out as if stricken by some beneficent enchanter's wand, into bright, tender greenery; when the incessant chorus of the vernal frogs was blended with the weak but cheerful strain of the American robin; when the winds began to breathe with a soft, balmy whisper, and the sun to wax very warm at mid-day; then did the innate passion stir up the inward man, and I began to query concerning the spring sports of Canada. Not much, however, did I learn to encourage me in the pursuit—a few unhappy woodcock—which, I blush while I write, the Canadian sportsmen blush not to slaughter, when they should be most safe from violence, just in the act of mating, and some rare, scattered snipe, to be found at far intervals by some land-runnel or snow-swollen streamlet in the bare open fields, were all the hopes held out to me by the sage heads of the Quebec sporting world. “Had you been three months later”—they all held to the same tale—“we could have

shown you such snipe shooting as the world cannot show besides. You may kill sixty couple any day in July or August, at Chateau Richer, on Crane Island; but now it's of no use at all; you may walk all day and get a wretched couple, or two couple at the best!" "But why?" I still persisted, "Why? Don't the birds come on here in spring flocks?" "Only in straggling wisps, five or six at a time, wild, watchful, scattered, making no stay among us." "True, in the fields I can believe you readily; but in the marshes, at this Chateau Richer, which you speak of?" "None are ever killed there in the spring." "But why not? Did you ever go there in spring? Did anybody ever go?" "No; no one ever goes in spring; it was no use," etc., and so in all the plentitude of my self-wisdom, and, as I fancied, of experience, I convinced myself that the reason no birds were killed in spring was simply that no one went to kill them; and that I should find all the marshes full, and do great things. To this notable conclusion I partially succeeded in bringing a young friend of mine, a good shot and staunch walker, and highly promising, although young sportsman. So we two—very quietly determining to give the old shots a lesson—set forth one lovely afternoon to introduce spring snipe-shooting on the St. Lawrence. After a hearty luncheon on mutton-chops and right good ale, we chartered a *marche-donc*, a two-wheeled vehicle not much unlike to a New England chaise or New York gig, save that it has no head, and in lieu of a dashboard a horizontal strip of wood six or seven inches wide, whereon the driver sits, encouraging his active, stout and docile cob by the two talismanic words whence comes the title of the vehicle. Into this we ensconced ourselves, with gun-cases and carpet-bags, and due provision of tea, sugar, brandy and bottled porter; and then—my two setters and friend Aleck's spaniels, Top senior and Top junior, trotting along behind us, followed by a most heterogenous group of turnspits, mastiffs, terriers and curs of low degree—through the sweet suburb of St. Roche, away we went across the long bridge over the St. Charles river, through Beaufort, with its handsome church midway the opposite hill, toward the sublime fall of the Montmorenci. Here, for a while, we paused to gratify ourselves with a sight never too often to be seen, of that most lovely cataract, and to

refresh our good, chunky little horse, who had trotted along most unremittingly, with three stout men and their baggage, at a rate of full ten miles the hour. After a little stay we started—and I shall not inflict upon my reader, if happily I find one, the hundred times described description of the falls—and for the sketch which I took on the spot, it pertains in nowise to snipe shooting, so pass it—intent on reaching Chateau Richer in time to get an hour or two of shooting before sunset. The road was very lovely, the season and the evening exquisite. Ten miles we drove along the marge of the magnificent St. Lawrence, his broad and sea-like waters rippling and sparkling to our right, with a fair verge of cultured fields, meadows and garden grounds, and here and there an orchard lying between them and the road; while to our left a steep and abrupt bank, fringed with dense underwood, overhung us, a thousand small, transparent torrents brawling and gurgling down its flanks, were lost in the mighty river. Hundreds of whitewashed cottages, gable-end to the road, looked out upon the meadows and the gorgeous stream, and many an elm tree, centuries old, drooped with its newly-budding garlands over the winding wheel-track. In short, the whole road is a village, a long, long, straggling village; every house clean and tidy to a wonder, with whitewashed walls and white blinds to the well glazed casements, and neatly-painted stands with flowers, moss roses and fine clove carnations adorning every window; and peasant maids, with their black, roguish eyes and broad-leaved hats of home made straw, and short, full petticoats of homespun, laughing and courtesying to the strangers from every open door. And this is the country, this the people, which a few demagogues among themselves, and a few *traitors* in the councils of the mother country, would make us believe—would make themselves believe—to be oppressed and wretched! The merriest, the happiest, the most contented, the most quiet-minded people whom the sun looks on in his whole career of glory. Without a tax to pay, without a want which their own land supplies not, almost an illustration of old Arcadian pastorals—spinning their own cloth from the wool shorn from their own sheep, tanning their own leather, weaving their own hats, grinding their own grain, raising every article they wear, or eat,

or use—brandy and tea alone excepted—their laws, their language, their religion guaranteed them, they can be lashed into rebellion only by their worst enemies, the agitators, under most specious lies! The loudest clamorers dare not assert to these poor, harmless, happy peasants that they *are* injured or oppressed—but only that they *will be*.

Now, the lie runs, that England is about to overthrow the Roman Catholic Church; now to explode the language; and with a people—few of whom read, few of whom visit the large towns, none of whom are capable of understanding England's policy or the state of affairs on an extended scale—the lie becomes a current truth, and the good, honest peasant suffers, to pander to the demagogue's ambition.

But to return to our shooting. At about four o'clock we reached the beginning of the marshes. The road swept off toward the hills, which here receded from the river, enclosing a wide tract of flat alluvial land, a mile or two in length by perhaps half that width—the inner edge of this area fenced off and cultivated; the outer, next the river, unenclosed, intersected by many creeks and streamlets, now full and glittering to the sunshine, for the flood tide was running, and overflowed at times—being the famous snipe ground. At the far end of this our driver told us we should find easily the house of *Pierre Dubois*, with whom we were to pass the night, and we resolved to beat it faithfully to-night, that so we might learn the best spots and choicest haunts of our predestined victims against to-morrow's dawn. Well, out we jumped and loaded, pulled up our fen boots to mid-thigh, whistled our dogs to heel, climbed the Canadian palings (no easy task, by the way) which intervened between the high road and the marsh; and strode on, confident of sport, and in anticipation gloriously triumphant over the old slow-coaches of Quebec.

Scarcely, however, had I made three steps across the last fence ere I saw that the laugh was against us. From the very nature of the ground, it was at the first glance self-evident not only that there could be no snipe on it now, but that it never could be *spring* snipe ground. It is, as I have said, a flat alluvial sweep of land, intersected by innumerable streamlets, filled to

the brink and over it at high tides, but at low water forming deep channelled gulleys through the soft greasy mud, ten or twelve feet at least beneath the level of the meadows. This flat is covered during the summer by a luxuriant crop of soft and tender grass, rarely rising above six inches from the soil—watered by all the runs of which I have spoken, and overflowed in the vicinity of these, and all along the beach, at every tide. In consequence the snipe, which come on from the remote north immediately after getting off their young, alight on this and similar levels by myriads at a time toward the latter days of July, and remain there in swarms, fat, lazy and reluctant to get up, till the autumnal frosts, which begin early in September, drive them down to more southern latitudes. During the winter, on the contrary, these meadows are covered with snow, which, thawed partially at every rising of the tide, is again congealed by the excessive cold, the moment that the ebb commences, into a sheet of solid ice. The grass is utterly killed down, and the roots are so much affected that it requires a more than ordinary degree of heat and sunshine to regenerate the stricken verdure. At a glance, then, when I set foot on it, and saw the whole wide range of meadow overspread with the dead yellow filaments which had been grass last summer, without one blade erect, or covered enough anywhere to have shielded a grasshopper, I saw that our cake was dough. There was, however, nothing for it but to persevere. Our route bedward and supperward lay straight ahead, and having come, I thought it quite as well to see the thing well out; so on I strode, most manfully, bearing my gun half cocked in the hollow of my arm, with the forefinger of my right upon the trigger guard, as if I had expected at each step to hear the shrill “skeap! skeap!” Waving my setters to the right and left, as heads up and sterns down they scoured the greasy flat, and whistling to them cheerily when they stood still and stared in my face, as if to ask me why the devil I had brought them there, bye and bye I reached one of the channeled runs which I have described, full and flooded, for the tide was now well up. Knowing nothing about the nature of the ground, seeing all around me a dead level, and quite forgetting the great rise and fall of the tide, I never suspected above eighteen inches of water, and confident in my fen boots in I strode fearlessly.

For about ten or twelve paces it was quite shallow, not at the most above my ankles, but very dark and muddy. Well, I had not a thought of danger, and on I was just stepping, when by strange luck one of the setters, which so far had been following steadily at my heals, sprung forward, and turning completely head over heels, disappeared for a few seconds, then rising to the top swam a dozen strokes or two and landed, whereat I sagely turned about, walked up the runnel, crossed it with ease two hundred yards above, and proceeded with my beat. The following morning, however, going over the same beat when the tide was out, I found to my astonishment my foot-steps at the brink of the ravine (for such it was) twelve feet at least in depth, and twice that distance over. Had I got in I must have lost my gun, and not improbably my life; for though a light and active swimmer, I had on huge fen boots, which would have dragged me down, and the soil was so slippery and greasy as to yield neither hand nor foothold. Of this I knew not anything, and I accordingly strode on, beating the outer margin of the meadow with all diligence, while Aleck, with his spaniels, was making good the landward side, until I reached the broader channel of the St. Anne's, which does not cut itself a gorge like all the smaller rivulets, but bringing down a copious limestone deposit, has actually overspread the mud with a shelly coat of petrifaction, and spreads out over a broad bed with a hard bottom, making a loud and brawling murmur as it crosses the nearly level marshes. Having thus finished our beat, we headed up to the road, weary enough, and anxious for our supper. On reaching the main road we asked the first *habitant* we met for *Pierre Dubois*, and were directed half a mile ahead to *Pierre Dubois le petit*. We reached the house and cursed our stars to find that no *marche-donc* was there, and that we must hark back again to a mile beyond the spot where we had first enquired, to find the residence of *Pierre Dubois le grand*. Away we went again, and this time went too far, and found that we had got to the house of *Dubois fils* instead of *Dubois pere*; and in the end, when utterly worn out and dead, we got to the right place, were pleased to learn that all the people for two miles along the road—or twenty for aught I know—were called *Dubois*; and that instead of holding ourselves unlucky, we ought to have been marvelously thankful that we had

found the place at all. Once landed at our quarters, we lost no time in pulling off our fen boots, and replacing them and our heavy shooting jackets by easy slippers and loose dressing gowns—ushered as we had been, into a large, low, white-washed room, with two large beds decked with check curtains, festooned to huge posts of black walnut. A three-legged table in the middle of the room, and two or three huge long-backed chairs completed the furniture, if we except sundry strips of rag carpet, a dozen tawdry prints of saints, a crucifix at the head of either bed, and a small pot of holy water in a narrow niche beside the door. Before the latticed window stood the eternal flower stand, with its choicest freight of roses and carnations, and on the table, before many minutes had elapsed, was laid a snow-white cloth with boiled and poached eggs, hot dry toast, fried bacon and fresh butter; the teapot duly scalded was brought next, and we ourselves, with all the skill we learned at Cambridge, prepared the highly flavored brew. We supped, smoked our cigars, discussed a jorum of hot brandy punch, and, having seen our quadruped companions well supped and provided with clean straw, turned in. Before we closed our eyes, however, we settled our proceedings for the morrow; of snipe it was most clear there was no hope; duck, however, it was said, by dint of creeping through the gulleys, might be slain on the shore; we resolved, therefore, to take an early breakfast, to beat along the verge of the St. Lawrence for ten miles farther, killing what ducks we might, and then to mount our *marche donc*, visit the falls of the St. Anne's, a splendid cataract, far embosomed in the hills and little known—comparatively speaking—and thence to hurry home for a late dinner! Our plan devised, we slept upon it, rose early and fed heartily, started upon our final tramp with the first peep of dawn, picked up a duck or two—but nothing to make up for our delinquencies—drove onward, and saw what I shall not name here, nor pretend to describe, for hath it not been written in the thirty-second book of the third volume of Frank Forester's *Experience by Field and Flood and Forest of the United States and British Provinces?* Suffice it, that although we killed no game, although we got marvelously quizzed and gibed in Quebec, I have not yet regretted my trip to Chateau Richer, although I there learned that there was *no* spring snipe shooting on the St. Lawrence.

## SPRING SNIPE; A RAMBLING PAPER.

BY FRANK FORESTER.

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*Solvitur acris hyems Grata vice veris et Favoni.*

THE signs of the season begin to justify us in looking forward to the early arrival of our much esteemed spring visitor *gallinago*, better known, though not, as Audubon informs us, *correctly*, as the English snipe.

He will soon be winging his way high in mid-air from the rice fields and mild climate of Georgia and the Carolinas, toward his summer retreat and nestling places among the cool waters and willow swamps of icy Labrador. But on his way he will tarry with us for weeks, perhaps, if the season favor, for months—affording the best of sport to our sportsmen, the most delicious of delicacies to our epicures; and, as I have said, dear “Spirit,” the signs of the season justifying us in believing that his advent is near at hand, I will add further, that many prognostications lead me to think that he will come to us this year in greater numbers than in past seasons, and that he will give us a fairer chance than he has given us of late, of perpetuating his slaughter pleasantly, and luxuriating upon the fruits of our prowess; in other words, it bids fair to be a devilish good snipe season.

Now you will ask me, peradventure, what are the signs of the times upon which I rely as sure tokens of his approach? The signs are manifold, and for the most part simultaneous; the appearance of shad *abundant* in our streams, may be held as an

almost infallible token of the presence of snipe in our meadows—the piping of the bluebird, like himself a passenger from the sunny south, is melodious to the sportsman's ear, as the fife which harbingers his march—the croak of the vernal frogs, the like cause, ceases to be to him unmusical—the swelling of the yellow buds on the waterside willows, and the sprouting of the tender green marsh grasses, all speak clear tidings to the eye of the true sportsman; and of these many are even now about us.

About ten days ago, as I was sitting before breakfast, toasting my toes at the stove, and wishing earnestly that the Irishman would descend—before which no black tea or buttered toast—I suddenly heard a faint chirrup out of doors. I started to my feet enraptured, very nearly upset the bewildered chess player, who was ruminating on *that* problem, the first idea of which dawned upon him at the bottom of the Passaic the day he half drowned me, and rushed out to the little esplanade at the top of my turf terraces. I was looking about me earnestly and listening with all my ears; Checkmate had joined me, yawning and wondering, and somewhat disgusted. Again it fell upon my ear, and following the sound my eye caught the small stranger, shivering his wings in the early sunshine on the top of a feathery cedar, and whistling his merry greeting to the northern morning.

“There he is! there he is! I thought I could not be mistaken! By George! I am right glad to see him.”

“A-ah!” drawled Checkmate, “that d—d dirty little bird! What is it?”

“A bluebird, Checkmate; the bluebirds have come!”

“A-ah! I suppose they have, if that's one; but I'd much rather breakfast had come. D—n the bluebird! what the devil have you got to do with bluebirds?”

“They are a sure sign of snipe—that's all.”

“A-ah!” And Checkmate relapsed into his problem, and I went to my sanctum to take the plugs out of my gun-barrels and see how the mainsprings worked after a winter's disuse. That very afternoon the first haul of shad was drawn on the Passaic, and the next morning a sporting neighbor, a jolly Yorkshire farmer, by the way, called—or as he would have termed it *happened in*—to inform me that he had flushed an *odd* bird,

meaning thereby a single bird, in a little spring run near his house. Thereafter, post followed post, hot with tidings; a whisp had been seen wild and wary on the Elizabethtown meadows; two or three had been flushed on the Hoboken marshes; and last, a couple had been killed on Train's meadows—in all seasons the earliest ground.

The yellow buds have swollen on the waterside willows—the green marsh grasses are sprouting wherever warm rains have trickled over the soil.

Therefore the snipe are coming. But, gentle "Spirit," they have not yet come—for one sign is still wanting, without which all the others are nothing worth, although by itself insufficient. The frogs have not yet begun to attune their *brekek, kekek, koax, koak*, as old Aristophanes interprets their delectable music to written words—proving thereby that the frost is not sufficiently *out of the ground* to allow them to bore their way upward from those deep subterranean dormitories into which they burrow beyond the reach of weather, to return with returning April to the upper sunlight.

The frogs and the worms ascend together to the surface, and until they do ascend, vainly shall you look for master *Gallinago* on inland marshes, or on wet upland fallows, vainly shall you pursue him anywhere, unless, like a friend of mine, from whom I derive much curious sporting information, you should have the luck to find and kill him in great numbers *on the beach at Rockaway!!!*

Joking apart, however, depend upon it, the snipe are coming. There have been three consecutive white frosts, and it tried hard to rain, and did make out to drizzle a few, yesterday—the clouds are mustering gray and northeasterly, and there is that delectable salt water rawness in the air, which defies dreadnaught pea-jacket or rain-proof Mackintosh, making its way clear through skin and muscular flesh to the very bones, portending a north-easter.

It will rain this evening or to-morrow like sticks-a-breaking—it will rain, "Spirit," days three at least, peradventure seven. Then will the sun shine out genial; the wind will come out of

the west, soft and balmy; the frogs will croak far and near; and then on with your fustian jacket and away to the scene of action, for then you will be sure that *snipe are come!*

So much for the speedy advent. Now for the good season, whereon I will not so long detain you. I have watched the weather, "Spirit," somewhat closely during the three *lustra* which I have spent in this vast republic, watched it as behooves a sportsman to watch, curiously; and I have noted that an early spring is invariably a cold, variable, uncertain, fitful, d—n—ble spring—a very stepmother of the year, and *vice versa*. Now, snipe do not love variable weather. They will pitch, indeed, and rest and feed for a day or two, but then they are up and away, no one knows whither; and even while they do tarry, they are so wide awake, so wary and so wild, that there is little chance of making a tolerable bag.

In mild, soft weather, on the contrary, they stay with us for two or three months, and sometimes even breed here. It is on sunny days, when the herbage is sufficiently dry to admit of their squatting down with their breasts pressed closely upon the grass or rushes, that they lie the hardest, and allow dogs to point them, which they will rarely do when the foliage is wet, walking about at such times a tip-toe, with their necks stretched to the utmost, listening for every sound, and springing on the least alarm, with their sharp, shrieking whistle.

On their first arrival snipe are found for a day or two often-times on the salt meadows, and sometimes, in very dry seasons, for a longer time, but such places are not congenial to them, and the food which they find thereon is apt to render their flesh *fishy*—or, as it is perhaps more correctly termed, *sedgy*.

After this pause they remove to the inland or fresh meadows, and are to be found most abundantly, especially in wild and blustering weather, in warm and sheltered situations, under the southern-skirts of woodlands, where such are to be found on the meadow edges, where living springs, or, as the country folk call them, warm springs, boil out of the ground, for there the herbage is always the greenest and most succulent, and food the most abundant.

In weather of this kind, especially easterly weather, they are at times found in great numbers among briars and bushes, where the ground is springy or even splashy, and I remember one occasion in which in three day's shooting I bagged, with the aid of a friend, above a hundred snipe, while two other sportsmen, as good shots as ourselves, or nearly so, who were shooting the whole time within sound of our guns, bagged but eleven in the same time, simply in consequence of the fact that they persisted in beating the open meadows, while we shot among the brushwood and briars on the wood edges. This was at Pine Brook, on the Long Meadow, which I consider as decidedly the best *early* ground in the country. At Chatham I once bagged twelve couple of snipe in thick covert, among high timber, precisely on the ground which in summer is the best cock ground, but on that day it was blowing a positive gale, with flurries of snow and hail, and I was led to beat the wood almost accidentally, by observing several snipe which rose wild and out of distance to pitch in that direction.

At the English neighborhood, likewise, which used to be excellent spring ground, until it was completely overrun and devastated by cockney shooters from the city, I have had good sport among the thick brushwood to the left of the turnpike road on this side of the toll-gate, where the coppice is intersected by numerous muddy cowpaths, in which the birds can bore easily and procure an abundance of their favorite nutriment.

I remember on this ground many years ago, when I was but a novice in American shooting, to have bagged fourteen brace of birds without a dog. My pious reader will, I fear, be horrified at hearing this deed was done on Good Friday; but I was at that time engaged in a business which kept me closely fettered to the city, and it was only on holidays that I could make my escape from *durance vile* to the free wilds and waters.

Later in the season the birds resort to the open meadows, and frequent in vast numbers the hollow places on the inland marshes, which having been filled with stagnant water in early spring, by the process of evaporation and absorption have been covered with a rust-colored, and muddy scum, through which the

soft grass shoots beautifully green and tender. These places in Jersey are called "slanks," and it will be well for the sportsman who is not acquainted with localities, and whose eye is not sufficiently practiced to detect them by the lay of the land, to inform himself concerning them by enquiring of the country folks, as in warm weather, in April and May, his sport will depend in a great measure on his beating them, the birds frequently deserting the open ground entirely and congregating in vast flocks in these choice situations. I am satisfied that I once flushed two hundred birds from a slank of this kind on the Big Meadow, at Pine Brook, a moderately sized prairie enclosed by tall woods, to the westward of the tavern, which is exceedingly good late feeding and lying ground. I had beat the whole meadow blank, when one of my setters came to a dead point, but too near his bird, which rose under his nose, fluttered a few yards, fat and lazy, and alighted again without observing the dog, which held his point. On my walking up some thirty birds rose together, out of which I killed a double shot, some twenty or thirty rising at the report of my gun. After loading I moved forward a pace or two, when the dogs again stood stiff, and, as I could plainly perceive, on *live* birds; the same thing happened a second and, to make a long story short, a third time. I killed three double shots—no great feat, by the way, for the birds were as fat, and flew almost as heavy as chickens—without moving ten steps, and at the last shot full a hundred birds rose at the sound, and scattered themselves all over the meadow which I had previously beaten. How numerous they were may be judged from this fact, that I had no sport, up to that time, and that it was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon when I came upon these birds, and that afterwards I bagged sixty-three snipe off my gun, for I was alone. It is true that I shot till it was so dark that I could not see any longer, but the meadow was positively alive with them to the very last.

A few easy rules and bits of light advice to learners and I have done; and here I hope that accomplished shots will not sneer at my dignifying by mentioning little matters which are well-known to them, remembering, perhaps, that they acquired the knowledge

of such niceties only by long experience, and that a word spoken in season might have enabled them to return home as they do now with a well-filled game-bag, instead of a beggarly account of empty pockets.

In the first place, then, rather a windy day is the best for snipe shooting, though it should be a southerly or westwardly wind, by no means an easterly wind; and contrary to the rule for any other kind of game, the ground should be beaten *down wind*, and the dog in case he should point *up wind* should be invariably *headed*. The cause of this once told is very simple. The snipe cannot rise except up wind, and if forced to flush by a person going *down* upon him, will lie harder and closer, and will ultimately rise crosswise to the right hand or the left, affording an easy and close shot; whereas by suffering them to rise *up wind* he will go off wild and at a long distance—presenting but a small target to the shot, and often balking the sportsman's aim by his sharp twistings.

And here I will observe that for a second or two the snipe hangs a little on the wind before he gathers way, after which he goes off with prodigious velocity, twisting to and fro at every ten or twelve paces with great rapidity. Many shots of the old school have recommended young sportsmen to wait until he has done twisting before firing, but this is, in my opinion, very injudicious, as the bird rarely or never ceases to twist until thirty or forty yards distant, when of course the chance of killing him is greatly diminished.

I have found it the best and by far the most *killing* way to shoot him as quickly as possible after he rises, and if possible during the moment in which he hangs on the wind; this is done most easily by fixing the eye upon the object steadily as the butt comes to the shoulder and the barrel to the line of vision.

Dogs are not much needed in spring snipe shooting, as the birds rarely lie so hard as to admit of their being pointed, although a good retriever is useful. The best dog is an old, slow, steady pointer, when the weather is warm; although I prefer the setter as a steady-working, all-weather dog, from his great ability to endure cold and face ice, which sets the pointer whimpering and

shivering painfully, and from his great love for water and his aptitude for fetching.

I will only add that No. 8 is by far the best shot for snipe, as indeed I think for all game, and that with Curtis & Harvey's powder, and Starkey's waterproof caps, a sportsman may be deemed well found for the field.

After the rain, dear "Spirit," I shall take the field steadily; if, therefore, you have any friends who desire a hard day's tramp, a chance of a good day's sport, and a certainty of a leg of mutton, why—send them to the Cedars; at all events, you shall have a dozen couple of spring snipe.

MARCH 9, 1847.

## DOMESTICATION OF GAME BIRDS.

MY DEAR SIR :—Your letter of the seventeenth inst. reached me yesterday morning, and I hasten to give you whatever advice I can toward the accomplishment of your interesting project.

First, I have no doubt of the success in *hatching* the eggs after so short a transportation as one of a hundred miles or two, since I have succeeded with the eggs of the wood-duck—which becomes as tame or tamer than common poultry—brought from even a greater distance. The question is of *time*.

The best material in which to pack them is *very dry bran*, and great care must be taken to prevent their being shaken. The great thing is to have them taken before the grouse begins to sit, and to have a hen ready under which to put the eggs without delay.

Now, as to the complete domestication of the bird—I confess I regard it as quite hopeless. I have seen the experiment tried with the English partridge, *perdix cinerea*, the European and American quails and the Scottish moor-fowl, but the young, to the sixth generation, will escape when they can.

Thus far only I feel sure of success: If a person having sufficient range of land, would devote ten acres or more solely to this object, surrounding it with a picket, lattice or wire fence fully ten feet high, and place his broods with the old hens when just

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NOTE.—Through the courtesy of John H. Beardsley, formerly of Cleveland, Ohio, the editor of the present volume is enabled to present the following original and hitherto unpublished letter from the pen of "our Frank," upon a subject which renders it especially entertaining and valuable to the fraternity of American sportsmen. Though last, it is by no means least in value, of the articles comprising this work. It is to be hoped that the experiment may be tried by some eastern sportsman, and in case the instructions are fully carried out, the success of the project might be almost assured.

able to fly, therein, having previously neatly amputated the lower wing joint of one wing—the ground being of a proper nature—I have no doubt that they would breed there and become comparatively tame; and that the broods produced by them would haunt and ultimately stock the neighborhood.

The ground should be as irregular and of as broken surface as possible, little hillocks and depressions, and, if possible, having a small stream through it, although this is immaterial, as I believe the pinnated grouse drinks only the dews or raindrops on herbage.

Part of it should be covered with low brush, such as winter-greens, sheep-laurels, scrub-oak or the like, and with ragwort and other tall weeds to give the birds shelter—and part should be cultivated with corn and buckwheat in patches.

There should be very few trees, and these trimmed up to ten feet from the ground, to prevent the birds from climbing up to get an elevation whence to fly over the barrier.

Besides the cultivated ground it would be necessary to feed them, and that might be done so as to bring them to traps where they could be taken when required.

If it could be so arranged as to clip the feathers of the wings of the first broods raised to this state of half domestication, without shortening the bone, so as to compel them to remain incarcerated until after the second moult, it would of course facilitate complete domestication.

This might be arranged by baiting them into log pens similar to those used for taking wild turkeys, leaving them entirely unmolested except once or twice a year, when they might be secured by a downfall.

No dogs or guns should be allowed near the place, but the oftener the master should be among them, appearing to pass casually, without noticing them, the better.

The soil should be light and sandy, the exposure warm and sunny, and broken oyster shells, lime and gravel should be furnished, as also at times fresh meat cut fine and scattered widely as if sown broadcast.

The longer the first brood could be kept about the premises before turning them out into the enclosure the better, for the

tamer they can be rendered early, the tamer they will remain. Of course a smaller space than ten acres would suffice for a small scale experiment, but the great object is to give them an opportunity of hiding away their nests.

Should this first experiment succeed on a large scale, a second trial might be had of amputating the wing bone of the hen birds only, in order to see whether the cocks, though at liberty, would remain in company with them. Should this prove to be the case a great step would be gained toward total domestication, and should one succeed until the fourth or fifth generation with birds hatched in this *quasi* domestication, the experiment might be, in time, perfectly carried out.

I thank you for your obliging offer of procuring me the means of making the trial, but I have not the space of land, and am too near large towns to have a chance of success; besides that I fear the great additional distance would greatly increase the difficulty.

I have made about all the suggestions that occur to me, as likely to promote your views, and can only add that I shall look anxiously to hear the result of your endeavors, which I hope you will from time to time communicate to me, as I feel a lively interest in all matters relating to the production of wild animals, and stocking or restocking the wastes with the species which have been so ruthlessly and injudiciously exterminated.

Allow me to add that an excellent way of introducing any new winged game into any section of the country is the substituting their eggs in the nests of those species which abound—such as the pinnated grouse in those of the quail or ruffed grouse, or of hens which have the habit of laying out in the woods, etc.

I think I could procure a few pairs of the gray English and the French red-legged partridge, both of which varieties would I am sure succeed in Ohio, should you care to try them.

Should you fail of getting the eggs safely in *wheat bran*, have them each covered with a thin coat of gum arabic, which remove with a sponge and tepid water before setting them.

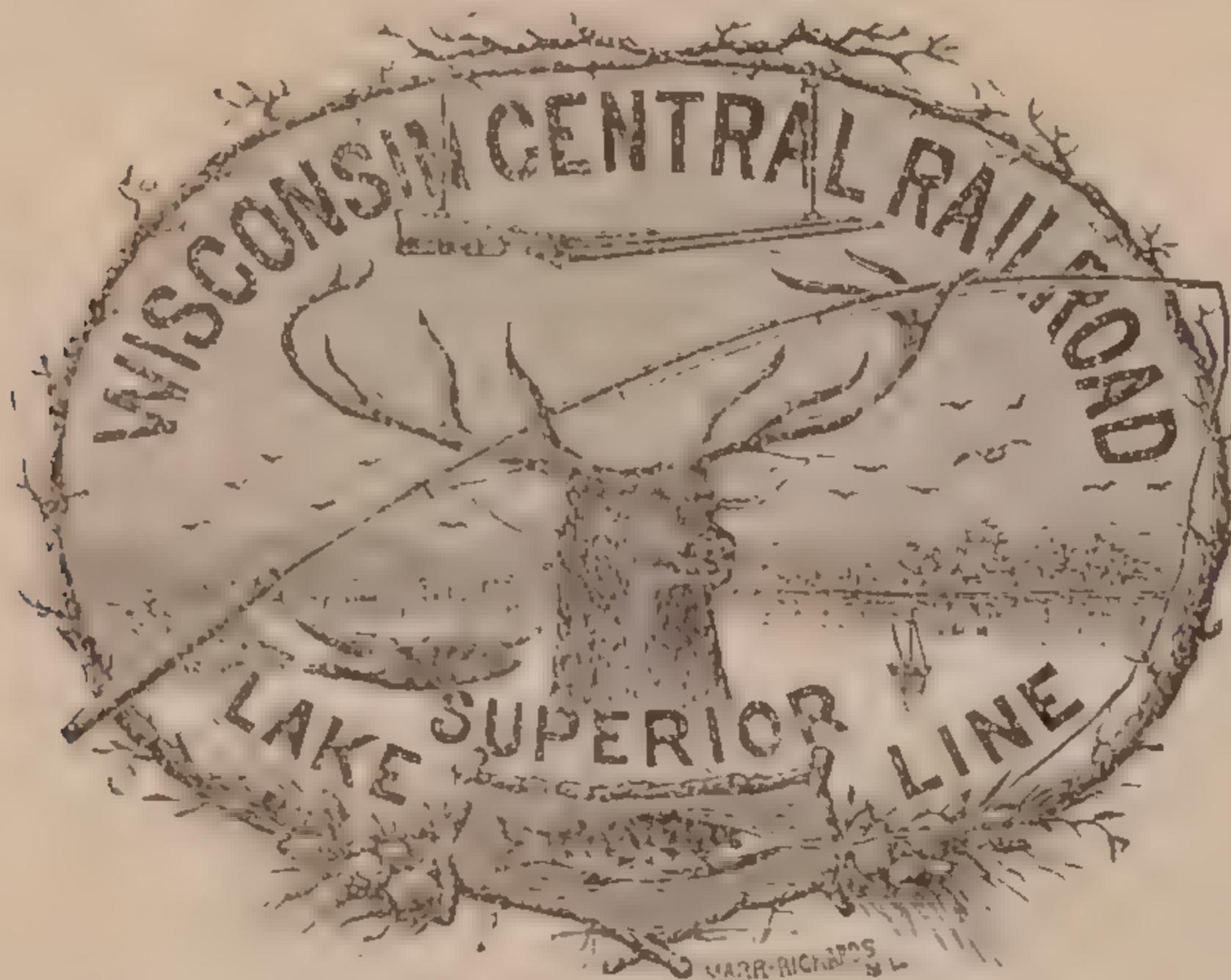
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THE CEDARS, March 20, 1857.



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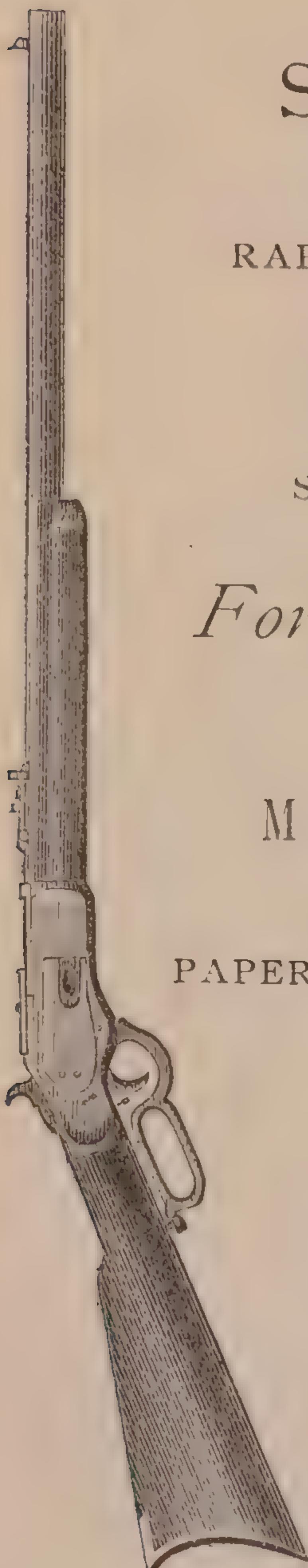
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